

United in Fact? A Critical Analysis of Intent and Perception in the Application of American and British Army Doctrine.

**A Monograph
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Abstract

United in Fact? A Critical Analysis of Intent and Perception in the Application of American and British Army Doctrine by Major A D Firth RWF, British Army, 82 pages.

In the complex modern environment, the importance of doctrine to a single national service is obvious. It is the glue that binds the military together in the face of an ever widening spectrum of conflict, ever more influential technology and an increasingly Byzantine network of international relationships. Equally its role in joint, and especially coalition warfare is fundamental to the level of integration that such a force might achieve. In the opinion of the author, those closest of military allies, the United Kingdom and the United States, commonly believe their military doctrines to be fundamentally similar to each other. This observation is based upon his experience of fifteen years in the British Army and latterly two years spent as a student at the United States Command and General Staff College. This is not surprising, perhaps as, after all, they emerged from the same chrysalis – the threat posed by numerically superior forces of the Soviet Union in Central Europe during the Cold War. Since then United States and United Kingdom forces have deployed together in high intensity conflict, on complicated peace enforcement and peace keeping operations and, of course, recently to Afghanistan and Iraq. This monograph asks whether perception of a common understanding of military doctrine really does exist in practice. Its relevance is fundamentally important to how the partners should view one another's approach to future coalition operations.

The primary research vehicle for this work was a survey conducted amongst American officers attending the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, and UK Army officers at their Joint Service Command and Staff College, Watchfield. The study examined the two armies' respective approaches to some fundamental components of operational design, asking whether their perspectives betrayed physical or conceptual foundations. The responses to this survey were set against the intent of respective doctrinal publications, the US Army Field Manual 3-0 and the British Army Doctrinal Publication 1, both of which are entitled *Operations*.

While confirming the nesting of British Army doctrinal intent and understanding the results of the survey sound an alarm bell for US Army operational doctrine. Instead of providing a conceptual framework for deployments across the spectrum of contemporary conflict as the authors had intended, Field Manual 3-0 has been received as having more utility for warfighting than operations other than war, for the tactical level of warfare than the operational, and about *doing* rather than *thinking* about and framing its approach to the environment. Based on this research the author argues that, unlike the British Army's manoeuvrist approach to operations, the US Army has no theoretical framework on which to base practical activities. This lack of a conceptual component to doctrine results in a potential missing link between the physical actions of the Army and the moral imperative displayed by the exercise of the military instrument of state power.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of Saturday the 6th of October, 1973, Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked into Israel in a co-ordinated, pre-emptive strike intended to redress the strategic outcome of the 'Six-Day' War of 1967. Despite the mounting concerns of the international community, Israel was totally unprepared for war and her armed forces found themselves reacting to events that threatened to engulf them and their state by their sheer size and complexity. Confusion reigned and it took nearly three weeks for the technically superior Israeli Defence Force to establish a platform for political negotiation. The conflict became a seminal experience not only for the protagonists but also for militaries around the world. Much research followed and many opinions have been published about the lessons of what came to be known as the 'Yom Kippur' War.¹ Analysis of Israeli tactics started an international quest to institutionalise modern warfighting practices by way of written doctrine. Many western militaries adopted the mandate to establish a set of commonly understood guidelines that would equip a military organisation to fight in the contemporary operating environment. Through such theoretical cohesion armies sought to cope with the sort of surprise and friction Israeli forces faced in 1973. The 1973 war prompted the significant growth of written military doctrine in the western world in the last thirty years.

The chief sponsor of such a process of doctrinal development was the United States Army, recently emerged from the dysfunctional experience of Vietnam, and seeking to establish focused principles upon which to build its future professional credo. The focus for this work was

¹ The context for the 1973 Arab-Israeli War is well set out in Ian J Bickerton and Carla L Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab Israeli Conflict*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991) while a focused perspective is provided by A.H. Cordesman and A.R. Wagner, *Lessons of Modern War: The Arab-Israeli Conflict 1973-1989* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990). Another significant study is T.N. DuPuy, *Elusive Victory* (Fairfax, VA: Hero Books, 1984). A particularly insightful précis of the conflict is offered by Dr George W. Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2000).

the recovery by the Israeli Army at the tactical level and its exploitation of superior low-level skills, drills and equipment to influence the strategic situation. The man charged to write this new doctrine for the US Army was General William E DePuy. His interest was the nature of a technologically advanced, limited war and became convinced that, in future, “US forces would have to concentrate on the battlefield against the enemy’s main force and defeat it quickly.”²

The manual produced by DePuy and his team in 1976 was controversial but accepted as a new departure for US Army doctrine that would allow its principles to develop alongside advances in technology and changes in the security environment. DePuy defined doctrine as, “a tool with which to co-ordinate the myriad activities of a complex organization...[it] consisted of those tactical techniques necessary for success on the modern battlefield.”³ This definition has remained consistent in the US Army until the present day, and contrasts sharply with DePuy’s contemporary critics who believed that doctrine, “was a guide that allowed for the infinite variety of conditions and situations characteristic of human affairs...[and] therefore required ‘judgment in application.’”⁴ The debate was therefore begun. Should written doctrine direct ‘how to fight’ as DePuy advocated, or should its main purpose be to frame ‘how to think about fighting’?

This monograph asks whether contemporary US Army doctrine is in the style of DePuy, rooted in the physical, or whether it seeks a more conceptual outlook for the modern operating environment. More importantly it compares what is written against what is understood by its audience and it does so in parallel with a similar analysis of the United Kingdom Army’s operational doctrine. In doing so it also asks whether there is a common intellectual approach to and therefore a natural understanding of warfighting doctrine between the two armies.

² Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What has to be Done: General William E DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations*, Leavenworth Papers Number 16 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1988), p.31.

³ Ibid., p.54.

⁴ Ibid., p.55.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DOCTRINE

In analysing the respective approaches of the US and UK armies to contemporary doctrine, it is necessary to make a short diversion to establish some parameters for the role of military doctrine. This foundation provides some crucial definitions that will colour subsequent findings and against which conclusions may be drawn. While William DePuy and his 1976 doctrinal manual might be said to be the birth of modern military doctrine, the concept itself is by no means so new. Over two thousand years ago Sun Tzu offered ‘the laws’ as one of five factors upon which an army might structure its approach to warfare. In the first chapter of his work the great Chinese philosopher presents two perspectives on doctrine. His ‘laws’ might be that which many understand today as doctrine, defined by Sun-tzu as encompassing, “organisation and regulations, the Tao of command and the management of logistics.”⁵ Taken literally, these headings offer all that DePuy wanted from doctrine and convert easily to a set of clearly defined rules. On the other hand, perhaps Sun-tzu would wish for these factors to be embedded in a more holistic understanding of the military art, and would see them only as a component of his complete treatise. This approach takes doctrine as a set of concepts rather than rules, for judicial rather than universal application. Further it seems to speak of a sort of hierarchy, which presents rules only as a subset of an overarching mindset. Perhaps different approaches to doctrine – the physical and the conceptual – might be said to be more or less relevant to different environments or perhaps even different levels of warfare.

While pondering this question it should be noted that this perspective is echoed in the writings of Carl von Clausewitz. Amongst his famous writing on the nature of uncertainty in war, the great Prussian notes, “absolute, so-called mathematical factors never find a firm basis in military calculations. From the very start there is an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good

⁵ Sun-tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc, 1994) p.167.

luck and bad that weaves its way throughout the length and breadth of the tapestry.’⁶ Clausewitz concludes that theory should be more than “absolute conclusions and prescriptions.”⁷ Everything has its place, however, and his writings contain just that prescription in places, capped by rather more generic observations in others.

In constructing a theory of war to deal with friction, Clausewitz advises that one should seek to bind the influences of the people (elsewhere termed passion), the commander and his army (linked to the play of chance) and the government (making war an instrument of policy).⁸ How can a theory that is not balanced between these three components be anything other than unrealistic and useless, he asks? It is concluded that, in addition to the concept of a hierarchy of doctrine, Clausewitz would add a degree of breadth, so that a warfighting doctrine should ideally encompass and serve to focus all the aspects of his related trinity.

Another important concept is that provided by Hans Delbruck in his *History of the Art of War*. Military strategy is, he says, divided into two basic forms. There is that which he calls *Niederwefungstrategie* (annihilation strategy) that always seeks the decisive battle and *Ermattungstrategie* (the strategy of exhaustion) which incorporates conceptual manoeuvre so that, “the battle is merely one of several equally effective means of attaining the political ends of the war...”⁹ Delbruck’s writing introduces those concepts most often repeated in today’s doctrinal discussions concerning the degree to which a nation’s military theory might be more inclined towards attrition or manoeuvre. A current theorist, Robert Leonhard, outlines the differences between these defeat mechanisms. He defines attrition theory as, “a ‘bottoms-up’ approach to war, because it focuses on bringing the enemy to battle and then seeks to defeat him

⁶ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) p.86.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, p 89.

⁹ *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986) p.342.

in that battle or in follow-on battles...the attrition theorist structures his operations and strategy around that battle.”¹⁰ In contrast, “Manoeuvre theory...attempts to defeat the enemy through means other than simple destruction of his mass.”¹¹

Historian and theorist Basil Liddell Hart has made a contribution to both Clausewitz’ concept of compency and Delbruck’s theory of effects. He saw two related spheres of influence upon warfighting – the physical and the psychological. Military doctrine that focuses the efforts of the people, the government and the army can be vectored against the physical or the psychological vulnerabilities of an adversary, or a combination of both. Actions in the physical sphere would perhaps relate to the concept of attrition warfare, while the psychological plays more towards Leonhard’s manoeuvre theory, that which Liddell Hart calls the indirect approach.¹² There is therefore an established set of theories that clearly differentiate between a physical and intellectual – or conceptual – mindset upon which militaries have historically based the application of force.

Finally, another perspective on the idea of components of fighting power was offered by the US Naval War College. In a paper published in 1942 aimed at expressing an overview of the perceived essentials of the military profession, the application of power was divided into three components - the mental, the moral and the physical.¹³ In the descriptions that follow it is clear that the physical and moral strength of the military is focused by its mental or conceptual framework for their employment. Therefore at the capstone level, doctrine should lie in the mental sphere, enabling and fusing the physical and moral capabilities of the military organization.

¹⁰ Robert R. Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver Warfare Theory and Airland Battle*. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1991) p.19.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For an explanation of this thesis, see B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*. (New York: Meridian, 1991) p.326.

¹³ United States Naval War College. *Sound Military Decision*. (Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Reprint, 1987) p.8.

Military doctrine should firstly be hierarchical, that is it should seek depth in clearly addressing its applicability to all levels of warfare from strategic to tactical. This may be best achieved by adjusting the level of detail as the focus moves down from the strategic to the tactical level, from the conceptual to the physical realm. It should also be broad in its scope, including in its higher, conceptual approach both the physical and the moral components of fighting power. Further, if doctrine's role is to bind institutional thought in order to counteract the friction of conflict, there must be a clear link between what is written and what is understood for it to be effective. How this challenge has been met by the US and the UK armies is the subject of this monograph.

DOCTRINE IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

General DePuy's 1976 offering generated renewed momentum for doctrinal development, but its contribution to the US Army was not in any way new. As far back as 1779, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* or 'The Blue Book' laid the foundation on which operations were conducted. In his account of DePuy's publication, Paul Herbert, a serving US Army officer and a West Point history instructor, described this manual as, "a single, conceptual expression of how to employ all the Army's various systems in offensive and defensive operations."¹⁴ Of interest to this work is the use of the words 'a concept of how to employ systems,' as opposed to a concept of how to conduct operations.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, field service regulations and manuals were published which, by the Second World War, had been capped by Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*. There followed a series of updated editions of this FM that, according to Herbert, did not drive acquisition, organisation, tactics, techniques and procedures but rather attempted to splice them together. This changed in 1976. DePuy's FM 100-5 was, "the capstone manual to an entire family of doctrinal manuals that constituted a wholesale replacement of the Army's then

¹⁴ Herbert, *Deciding What Has to be Done*, p.7.

current tactical doctrine. It attempted to present an overarching concept of warfare from which all other manuals dealing with separate parts of the Army would follow. FM 100-5 described ‘how to fight.’”¹⁵ This clearly answers the requirement to construct a hierarchy of doctrine as described earlier, and the emphasis on ‘how to’ puts it squarely in the physical component of fighting power. Orientation towards the physical component is problematical, says Major Robert Doughty of the Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, now a Colonel and the head of the United States Military Academy Department of History.

Although the evolution of doctrine since World War Two has been affected by a variety of influences, the emphasis on firepower, the defence and attrition has slowly and progressively increased until they have become the primary characteristics of US Army tactical doctrine.¹⁶

There followed three more versions of FM 100-5, in 1982, 1986 and 1993. According to a 1997 essay sponsored by the UK’s Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, the 1982 manual also lifted American doctrine to the operational level. Entitled ‘AirLand Battle’, “it was indeed the delineation and clarification of the operational level of war that lifted the vision of the commander out of the realm of tactics alone to give him a view of how tactics served the operational aims of the wider campaign.”¹⁷

The eighties saw the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and consequently the potential environment of conflict widened. American doctrine writers recognised this. General William Harzog, then commander of the US Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), speaking of the 1993 edition, said,

You have to understand that the 1986 version was a kind of culmination in the line of doctrinal thought that began back in the 1976 version. The 1993 version picked up on that theme, but it also had to grapple with the results of the post-Cold War era – operations other than war and force projection. We broadened our focus and moved from an offensive heavy warfight into an era which kept

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Maj R.A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1979) p.49.

¹⁷ John L. Romjue, “The Evolution of American Army Doctrine” *The Strategic and Combat Studies Institute Occasional* No 30 (Sept 1997) p 55.

those tenets but added versatility and the ability to deal with what has come since.¹⁸

In 2001 TRADOC sponsored another version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, the twelfth evolution being re-classified as FM 3-0. As work began on the new manual, US Army doctrine was secure in the knowledge that its capstone manual was pitched at the operational level, providing a warfighting philosophy that would link the tactical level to the strategic and that would address all areas of the now expanded operational environment.

DOCTRINE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ARMY

Although the UK Army had also enjoyed a long history of Field Service Regulations, it was not until the late 1980s when, doubtless inspired by US efforts to produce operational level doctrine, the then Commander in Chief of the British Army of the Rhine (CinC BAOR), General Sir Nigel Bagnall, became the driving force behind what became *Design for Military Operations; The British Military Doctrine (BMD)*¹⁹. Until then, three general statements had characterized UK Army doctrine,

First, that doctrinal developments in the sphere of warfighting has been haphazard and largely the product of hasty improvisation rather than doctrinal debate and the exchange of ideas in the calm of peace. Secondly, on the contrary, this has often been undertaken in the midst of war itself with consequent errors. Thirdly, in the first half of the twentieth century there has been a good deal of continuity in the approach to warfighting. This has stressed somewhat rigid, cautious methods relying on a great weight of firepower to cover an advance. There has been a tendency to regard the art of war as comprising separate compartments, offence, defence, firepower, mobility, morale and so on, with insufficient understanding that these are intimately related.²⁰

The 1989 publication of BMD recognised that previously the UK had not sought to articulate doctrine at a level above the tactical. Its intent now was to, “establish the framework of understanding of the approach to warfare in order to provide the foundation for its tactical

¹⁸ *Army Times*, 18 Aug 97.

¹⁹ *Design for Military Operations: The British Military Doctrine* (London: UK Ministry of Defence, 1996).

²⁰ *United Kingdom Army Doctrine Publication 1, Operations* (June 1994). p.1A-14.

application.”²¹ This capstone doctrine, like its American equivalent, sought to provide the idea on which tactics, techniques and procedures could be based. Linking BMD with the tactical level of doctrine were a short series of publications covering operations, command, logistics and training. First published in June 1994, it is the first of these, Army Doctrine Publication Volume 1 (ADP 1), *Operations*, that will form the substance for research in the remainder of this paper.

A TALE OF TWO ARMIES

When analyzing the respective doctrinal approaches of the UK and US armies, some major differences must be borne in mind. First, there is a significant difference in size. The US Army regular strength is nearly six times that of its British counterpart. This, together with the vast potential of the US industrial base to support mobilisation to an extent that could simply not be imagined by its allies, make it unique in the world today. The US cannot be overmatched at the present time by a conventional rival matching force for force. Second, and because of this quantitative difference, there is a tendency for US formations to be rooted at the tactical level, often manifest in the belief that even a corps operates below the operational level of war. This linkage between the tactical and strategic levels can be more difficult to relate to for a US officer than his UK colleague, who is not surprised to see an independent brigade working at the operational level in the contemporary environment. Finally amongst this by no means exhaustive list of differences, the UK Army is, of course, unique in its regimental system that has a very strong ethos of its own and is therefore a significant influence on the interpolation and dissemination of doctrinal concepts.

SUMMARY

The 1980s were a time of doctrinal development on both sides of the Atlantic. The US and UK armies alike sought to identify an operational philosophy upon which tactics, techniques

²¹ *British Military Doctrine*, Foreword.

and procedures could be based and which would be equally applicable to all aspects of the environment. This mandate was entirely supported by the most notable of military theorists, who have similarly identified the need for doctrinal depth and breadth. Although they have their qualitative differences, both armies therefore appear to be seeking the same effect from their respective capstone doctrine, the US FM 3-0 dated June 2001 and the UK ADP 1, both of which are titled, *Operations*. In the next chapter these documents are examined in more detail. This examination exposes similarities of approach, but also some essential differences which will respectively characterize the perceptions of officers charged with conducting operations predicated upon their understanding of current doctrine.

CHAPTER TWO

FIELD MANUAL NUMBER 3-0, *OPERATIONS*

According to the foreword, written by General Eric Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, FM 3-0 is intended to be the US Army's "capstone operations doctrine, which describes how Army forces, as part of the joint team, will be responsive and dominant across the full spectrum of operations."²² It goes on to say that the manual proposes five basic 'rules of thumb' for "warfighting, and by extension less violent actions."²³ These are:

1. Win on the offence.
2. Initiate combat on 'our' terms.
3. Gain the initiative and retain it.
4. Build momentum quickly.
5. Win decisively.

In offering these rules, FM 3-0 "provides a professional intellectual framework for how we operate."²⁴ This introduction should be set against a conversation that the author of this monograph had with Mr Michael Burke, a senior writer on the TRADOC team that produced the 2001 manual²⁵. He recalled that in October 1995 the team was tasked with producing a follow-on manual that would continue the conceptual development of US Army doctrine and raise the capstone document from the tactical to the operational level. At the same time it was to reconcile the use of force or threat of force with operations defined as other than warfighting. in the post-Cold War environment, in which, it was evident, there was increasing political will to use force in 'other' ways. Burke interpreted his mandate as an attempt to move away from predictable, templated operations towards a more generic, conceptual approach. In short, FM 3-0 was

²² United States Army *Field Manual 3-0* (June 2001), Foreword.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

intended to provide the conceptual component to US Army operations. It could be argued, however, that General Shinseki's words serve to dilute this conceptual approach. His focus on the five 'rules' of warfighting would be easily recognisable to Cold War warriors and portrays a distinct leaning towards the force-on-force end of the spectrum of conflict. Beyond the foreword, however, the stated purpose of the manual seems to put the intent back in perspective. It is worth including here in full because it seems to include all the proposed components of operational doctrine introduced in Chapter One.

FM3-0 establishes the Army's keystone doctrine for full spectrum operations. The doctrine holds warfighting as the Army's primary focus and recognises that the ability of Army forces to dominate land warfare also provides the ability to dominate any situation in military operations other than war. The foundation of FM3-0 is built upon global strategic responsiveness for prompt, sustained Army force operations on land as a member of a joint or multinational force. FM3-0 is compatible with joint doctrine. It provides overarching doctrinal direction for the conduct of full spectrum operations detailed in other Army manuals...FM3-0 provides a foundation for the development of tactics, techniques and procedures.²⁶

Later, it adds, "As the Army's keystone operations manual, FM3-0 provides the principles for conducting operations. It describes the Army's operational level role of linking tactical operations to strategic aims and how Army forces conduct operations in unified action...It also links Army operations doctrine with Army tactical doctrine"²⁷. So far so good, there is a clear intent to establish conceptual linkage between tactics and strategy by way of a doctrinal hierarchy, the creation of a platform for tactics, techniques and procedures and the broad sweep of addressing all possible operations in the spectrum of conflict.

The manual then splits into three parts. The first of these covers the Army's role in peace, conflict and war – across the spectrum of operations. It stresses again in the introduction to Part Two, however, that warfighting is the Army's primary focus, a sentiment rather at odds with the overarching concept, which hails responsiveness to all types of military operation. Part

²⁵ What follows is a synopsis of an interview Firth/Burke conducted on 20 Oct 02.

²⁶ *FM 3-0*, p.vii.

One also defines full spectrum operations. These include offensive, defensive, stability and support operations in any environment and in any combination. The key to the whole manual is the following paragraph:

Army doctrine addresses the full range of full spectrum operations across the spectrum of conflict. Army commanders at all echelons may combine different types of operations simultaneously and sequentially to accomplish missions in war and MOOTW. For each mission, the JFC and Army component commander determine the emphasis Army forces place on each type of operation.²⁸

This paragraph defines full spectrum operations. It is a laudable, all embracing concept which takes account of the mandate the writers were under to broaden US Army operational doctrine. It could be argued, however, that this is a statement of what the Army will do, rather than a philosophy of how it will think about its operational environment; in the physical realm rather than the conceptual. The remainder of Part One deals with the necessities of understanding joint and multinational operations, strategic responsiveness and force projection. It might be noted that the latter categories become ever more prescriptive in describing the “characteristics of force projection operations and the joint systems that support them...the different types of entry operations...an overview of security during force projection and the use of intermediate staging bases.”²⁹

In Part Two the manual returns immediately to warfighting. The first paragraph distills its essence into General Shinseki’s five rules and stresses how the Army should seek to mass effects in operations across the spectrum of conflict. The underlying concept is the use of “the principles of war and the tenets of Army operations to apply the elements of combat power in decisive full spectrum operations.”³⁰ Part Two also examines battle command and staff processes and their relationship in translating the commander’s intent into execution.

²⁷ *FM 3-0*, pp.1-14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *FM 3-0*, p.1-1.

³⁰ *FM 3-0*, p.4-1

Parts Three and Four FM 3-0 provides more supporting detail to its concept, in discussing offensive, defensive, stability and support operations in more depth, and introduces the contributions of information and combat service support operations.

ARMY DOCTRINE PUBLICATION VOLUME 1, *OPERATIONS*

The foreword to ADP 1 notes the changed security environment of the 1990s and the consequent need for modern doctrine to be reappraised. In doing so ADP 1 “provides the link between...British Military Doctrine and the tactical level Field Manual series, which describes how that doctrine should be put into practice. Specifically, it endorses and develops the manoeuvre approach to warfighting proposed in BMD.”³¹ This clear statement of the manual’s place in the doctrinal hierarchy not just of the UK Army, but of her Joint Services, is unambiguous. It also introduces the concept that is the focus of ADP 1 in the first paragraph of the manual – the manoeuvrist approach to warfighting. The foreword defines warfighting as any activity across the spectrum of conflict in which the military might be involved.

The introduction takes up this point. ADP 1 “sets out the Army’s approach to fighting in future conflicts...[It] provides the conceptual link between BMD which sets out the enduring British understanding of the nature of conflict, and the tactical level Army Field Manual series which describes how the doctrine should be put into practice...[It] is a handbook of neither practice nor procedures.”³²

This foundation clearly links the strategic environment to tactical capabilities through an illustration of the British approach to the operational art. The three parts of the manual that follow progress logically from this beginning. Initially illustrating its understanding of the spectrum of conflict, the manual introduces what it terms the ‘components of fighting power’³³:

The Conceptual Component – Doctrine

³¹ *ADP 1*, p.iv.

³² *ADP 1*, p.vi.

The Moral Component – The Ability to Get People to Fight

The Physical Component – Combat Power

These components, familiar as they are to readers of Clausewitz, Liddell Hart and others, operate together to utilise combat power in an environment that will be characterised by friction, uncertainty and chaos and their effect on human nature. This scene setter links to the critical chapter dealing with the British Army's approach to the conduct of operations which again takes account of the human dimension. ADP 1 believes that, "physical destruction of the enemy is not therefore a wholly reliable means of inflicting defeat in isolation...The most potent effect achieved by destruction is to damage the enemy's belief in his ability to win."³⁴ So, it is argued, the enemy's will itself becomes the focus of efforts to engage combat power in his defeat. Even Marshal Foch, a true disciple of the attritionalist school, believed,

Ninety thousand defeated men withdraw before ninety thousand victorious men solely because they have had enough, and they have had enough because they no longer believe in victory, because they are demoralised and they have no moral resistance left.³⁵

ADP 1 does not see modern combat as a fair fight. Rather,

Guile and ruthlessness are needed to ensure that by the selective application of violence appropriate to our ends, the enemy is left dead, wounded, captured, marginalized, frozen by fear and uncertainty, confused and isolated. He must be overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness, a feeling of paralysis born of the realization that his aims are not achievable. If defeating the enemy by destruction alone has limitations, the complimentary approach is to attack the enemy's will to resist. He must be made to feel constantly off balance as a result of his actions being preempted, dislocated and disrupted; three approaches to attacking the enemy's will.³⁶

Having established the core concept for UK Army operations in Chapter Two, the rest of the manual addresses issues faced by commanders and staffs tasked to plan and execute

³³ ADP 1, p.1-7.

³⁴ ADP 1, p.2-3.

³⁵ Martin Van Crefeld, *Command in War*. (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1985) p.254.

³⁶ ADP 1, p.2-4.

campaigns. Finally it applies the concepts of the manoeuvrist approach to operations other than war. This is apparently a seamless transition, with a mindset that applies equally to the application of military force at any point on the spectrum of conflict.

FLANKING FORMATIONS

THE US MARINE CORPS

It is perhaps useful at this point to consider the way in which similar organisations establish their conceptual doctrinal foundations. The US Marine Corps (USMC) underwent a similar experience to the US and UK armies during the 1980s and '90s in that they sought to publish a capstone operational doctrine linking strategic thinking to tactics, techniques and procedures. The first of these, Fleet Marine Force Manual Number One was published in 1989. Now termed Marine Corps Doctrine Publication Number 1-0 (MCDP 1-0), its four parts are described thus in the foreword:

Chapter One describes our understanding of the characteristics, problems and demands of war. Chapter Two derives a theory about war based on that understanding. This theory in turn provides the foundation for how we prepare for war and how we wage war, chapters three and four respectively.³⁷

This structure links once more to those recognised above, and it underlines the need for a theory of war, if the document is to provide capstone concepts. In MCDP 1-0 the USMC defines warfare in terms of its physical and moral characteristics – echoing the balance of those components of fighting power upon the conceptual fulcrum of doctrine that was identified in Chapter One of this paper. Friction, uncertainty and the human dimension are strong factors in defining a warfighting doctrine for the USMC, in a similar manner to the UK Army's concept. In

³⁷ See Lt Col H.T. Hayden, *Warfighting; Maneuver Warfare in the US Marine Corps* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1995) Foreword. Lt Col Hayden provides an authentic reproduction of original USMC doctrine in this book, together with his observations and comments.

fact, the USMC manual also names its doctrine manoeuvre warfare, while recognising that, “the American way of war traditionally has been one of attrition.”³⁸

There are two points to note from this very brief overview of USMC doctrine. Firstly, the USMC has recognized that there are at least two distinct ‘styles’ of warfare on offer to be encapsulated by contemporary doctrinal precepts – attrition and manoeuvre. These competing concepts were introduced into this paper in Chapter One and will be examined further later. Secondly, and more importantly, conceptual doctrine should ideally include a theory of warfare that can be easily explained as a way in which to *think* about how an organisation will operate. It is argued that if this is absent, or not clearly delineated, then doctrine is open to allegations of shallow physicality.

THE CANADIAN ARMY

The experience of the Canadian Army is appropriate because of that institution’s close cultural links with both the US and UK. In its capstone operational manual, grandly but rather obscurely entitled, *B-GL-300-000/FP-00 Canada’s Army: We Stand on Guard for Thee*, it, too, signs up to the concepts of manoeuvre warfare. In a monograph sponsored in 2002 by the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, serving Canadian officer Major Howard Coombs argued, however, that, “unfortunately, the legacy of the Canadian military in the twentieth century does not lend itself to the institutionalisation of the mindset required to effect manoeuvre warfare.”³⁹ He further contends that the doctrine is not sufficiently clear and precise in its mandate to provide the impetus to force systemic changes in subsidiary fields such as tactics, techniques, procedures, training, education, organisations and personnel management. This cognitive problem was recognized by Captain Paul Johnson, a Canadian Air Force officer, in an article that appeared in *Parameters* in 2000. Johnson introduces the idea of doctrinal dissonance,

³⁸ Ibid. p.54.

³⁹ Coombs, Maj H.G., *Canada’s Army and the Concept of Maneuver Warfare: The Legacy of the Twentieth Century (1899-1998)*. (US Army School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, 2002)p.ii.

the “sometimes strong difference between what is written in armies’ doctrine manuals and the way they actually behave on the battlefield”⁴⁰. In other words, there can sometimes be a disconnect between what is written and what is understood. Another Canadian officer wrote the following in 1988 by way of forecasting this ‘doctrinal dissonance’. In speaking of the way in which the Canadian Army has traditionally sought to “bring order and uniformity to the battlefield,”⁴¹ he says,

We have so ritualised our method of fighting by means of drills and procedures that the pursuit of order and the reduction of “friction”, as Clausewitz called it, has become one of the primary functions of a Canadian commander. But battle is inherently a deadly and disorderly affair. In pursuit of some sort of normalcy soldiers, of course, develop various techniques and methods of organising themselves within the disorder. In itself, none of this bad, for these techniques are indeed useful. *The difficulty is that the majority of Canadian officers never distinguish between the simple use of these techniques and implementation of an overall concept of warfare. In our system no difference is perceived; use of techniques is the system.*⁴²

The Canadian experience, therefore, is that their Army was traditionally rooted in the physical environment of conflict. The mere publication of a concept, a warfighting theory, does not necessarily bring a common understanding of those ideas to the users of the doctrine unless the concept itself can be easily explained in ways to change the ways people *think* rather than act.

SUMMARY

The US Army’s concept of operations is ‘to apply the elements of combat power in decisive full spectrum operations’. The UK Army’s concept is ‘the manoeuvrist approach to operations’. In iterating these concepts, FM 3-0 and ADP 1 have a recognisably common structure. Firstly, both manuals seek to place a conceptual approach to operations as a link between the strategic and the tactical levels of war, and hence to stay away from the prescriptive,

⁴⁰ Johnston, Paul, “Doctrine is Not Enough: The Effect of Doctrine on the Behavior of Armies.” *Parameters*, US Army War College, Autumn 2000, Vol 30 Issue 3. p.30.

⁴¹ Oliveiro, Maj C.S., “Maneuver Warfare: Smaller Can be Better,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Autumn 1988. p.70.

⁴² Ibid. Emphasis added.

physical component. Second, both stress the need to apply equally across the spectrum of conflict in the new security environment. Each manual attempts to bring depth and breadth to the operational art standing as they do as capstones to the organisational mindset governing how the respective armies will conduct operations. How well these concepts have been iterated and understood by those services will be examined in the following chapters. What will emerge is a fundamental difference between ostensibly conceptual approaches to the application of force. If the US Army has tried to introduce a versatile and overarching concept for any military operation, then, it is argued, it has failed to do so in the minds of its officers, who still harbour an attritional, physical mindset on which to base their operational planning and execution. This fact must be clearly understood by doctrine writers, higher commanders and coalition partners if operations in the varied and challenging environment of the twenty-first century are to be conducted successfully.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF OPERATIONAL DOCTRINE

Operational doctrine is the soul of an Army. Success across the spectrum of conflict is balanced upon the utility of a common mindset that stands as a bridge between strategy and tactics. Operational doctrine is a common thread that binds national intent to practical application. It must also be applicable to military deployments across a wide variety of potential environments. This linkage between the levels of warfare and across the spectrum of employment can only be conceptual in form if it is to produce a mindset – a framework for thought and analysis – upon which to plan execution. Figure 1 illustrates the function and form of operational doctrine.

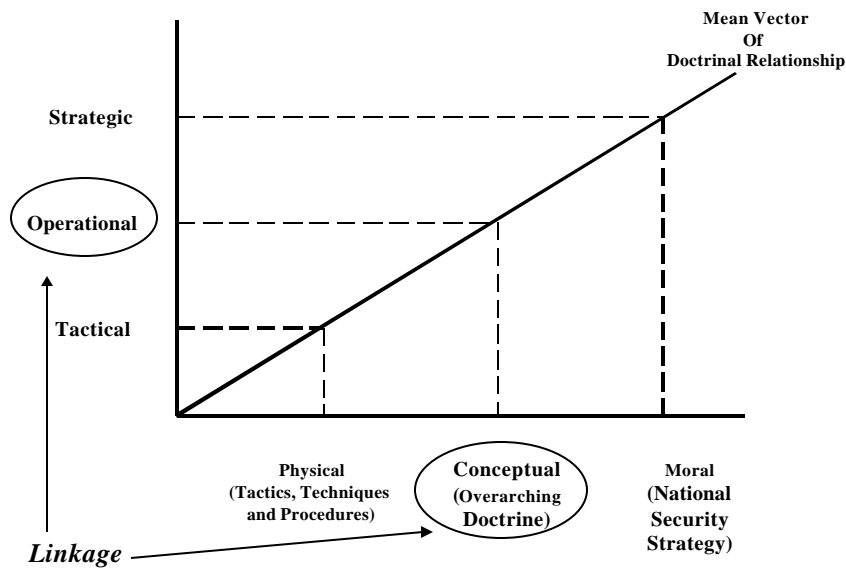


Figure 1. Graph illustrating the relationship between levels of conflict and doctrine.

As a general rule tactical doctrine should consist mainly of tactics, techniques and procedures and could therefore be described as lying at the physical level. Similarly, operational doctrine should secure the foundation of overarching doctrine, an intellectual construct for

military operations that provides the conceptual component of fighting power. Finally, the strategic capstone is put in place by such documents as National Security Strategy, that connect the military to the government and the people, and in Clausewitzian terms provide the overarching moral component. To skew any of these relationships, either consciously or otherwise, is to create risk for military operations.

As Paul Johnston recognises, publishing doctrine that is intended to lie at the appropriate level is not enough to make it effective. He says, “at the very least, a doctrinal re-write should include not just the re-release of field manuals, but changes in training, personnel, promotion and perhaps even recruitment policies.”⁴³ This mindset change clearly demands the full understanding of the users, the operators who are going to put the concepts into practice on operations. Therefore, doctrine itself must be clear in defining the parameters of thought that articulate its intent. If this is not done, the result is Johnston’s doctrinal dissonance.

Chapter One established that the writers of the US Army’s FM 3-0 published in June 2001 sought to codify a conceptual approach to operations. This has long been the role of the British Army’s ADP 1, which since 1994 has described the principles of the ‘manoeuvrist approach’. In order to discover how well the respective organisations’ concepts are clearly understood by their fielded forces, the author conducted a survey amongst commissioned officers of field rank in the UK and US Armies. The intent was to find whether the manuals had achieved a major purpose of operational doctrine, namely to act as a conceptual bridge between the strategic and the tactical levels of war and across the spectrum of conflict.

Consultations with the US Army Command and General Staff College’s Development and Assessment Division decided that the survey population did not have to be particularly large; that thirty people would be enough to provide a snapshot of opinion. The most easily accessible target for the survey was those officers who were, in academic year 2002/3, attending the US and

⁴³ Johnston, *Doctrine is Not Enough*, p.19.

UK intermediate staff training schools.⁴⁴ The eventual response was extremely encouraging. Twenty-eight UK and twenty-seven US replies were collated, an average response rate of 92%.

Questions were selected that would illustrate the understanding of respective doctrinal concepts. The aim was to discover whether either army had sufficiently incorporated an operational concept into its doctrine such that it could be interpreted and used by officers in a wide range of deployment options. The questions each addressed a particular component of operational design in order to compare existing theories with their role in US and UK army doctrine and their consequent understanding by operators. The results of the survey are included after the respective examination of each particular factor.

THE LEVELS OF WARFARE

SURVEY QUESTION

ADP 1/FM 3-0 is intended for use at which level of war?

- a) Tactical.*
- b) Operational.*
- c) Strategic.*
- d) All of the above.*

RELEVANCE

Although the recognition and definition of strategy and tactics are ancient concepts, that of the operational level is fairly new. Traditionally, strategy⁴⁵ was met through the application of tactics⁴⁶ in combat. As the size of armies grew during the period of the industrial revolution and the span of control became unwieldy, the need for a binding concept was generated. The

⁴⁴ For the US Army this is the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, and for the UK Army it is the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Watchfield.

⁴⁵ From the Greek, *strategos*, the art or office of general.

⁴⁶ Also from the Greek, *taktika*, meaning matters pertaining to arrangements.

connection between strategy and tactics now required more decentralised command.⁴⁷ The first doctrinal use of the term ‘operations’ by the US Army was in 1939 with the publication of FM 100-5, *Operations*. It was not until 1982, however, that the ‘operational level of war’ was accepted into US Army doctrine. This came after criticism of DePuy’s 1976 version for applying depth to warfare only in the light of its relationship to the battle⁴⁸, and not by truly linking strategy and tactics. The current manual’s treatment of the subject seems to indicate that the credibility of the operational level of war in the US Army has matured in the last twenty-five years.

The operational level of war is the level at which campaigns and major operations are conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres of operation. *It links the tactical employment of forces to strategic operations.*⁴⁹

The problem remains, however, in describing what that linkage looks like, how it is created, and what commanders at the operational level can do to establish it. In a seminal work, theorist William Lind, once an adviser to US Senator Gary Hart and a key contributor to the USMC’s approach to doctrine, wrote:

Traditionally, American armies have tried to attain their strategic objectives by accumulating tactical victories. They have given battle where and whenever it has been offered, wearing their enemy down engagement after engagement.⁵⁰

Following Lind’s observations, and bearing in mind Leonhard’s argument, there seems to be a tradition in the US Army that this linkage is created by the battle itself. The linkage is established by utilising the physical component of fighting power. If the US concept of operational linkage is physical, then it must be attritional, because attrition – destruction of the

⁴⁷ For an explanation of the emergence of ‘operational art’ see Van Crefeld, *Command in War* and James J. Schneider, “Vulcan’s Anvil: The American Civil War and the Emergence of the Operational Art” *Theoretical Paper Number 4* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 1991). An historiography of the US Army’s subsequent development of the operational art is to be found in Dr R.M. Swain, *Filling the Void: The Operational Art and the US Army*, Undated US Army School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph.

⁴⁸ Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*, p.132.

⁴⁹ FM 3-0, 2-3 Emphasis added..

enemy through concentration of firepower – is how a physical approach to warfare manifests itself on the battlefield. The current version of FM 3-0 takes an approach that is *conceptual*, however, and so it cannot be attritional in outlook. This line of argument supports the graphic depiction of linkages seen above in Figure 1.

Turning to the UK equivalent, ADP 1, a remarkably similar approach can be discerned.

Its definition of the operational level of war is as follows.

Joint campaigns and major operations are constructed and directed at the operational level in fulfillment of a strategic directive. It is the level that provides the gearing between military strategic objectives and all tactical activity in the theatre of operations.⁵¹

Although on the surface there is little or no difference between the US and UK definitions, it seems that the devil might be in the detail. Both nations include in their publications a series of questions that could be asked by the operational commander to clarify his thinking. The following table compares these questions in parallel.

FM 3-0 ⁵²	ADP 1 ⁵³
What military (or related political and social) conditions must be produced in the operational area to achieve the strategic goal (ends)?	Is there a political dimension?
What sequence of actions is most likely to produce that condition (ways)?	Does the action materially alter the situation?
How should resources be applied to accomplish that sequence of action (means)?	Does the action contribute directly to the strategic goal?
What are the likely costs or risks in performing that sequence of actions (risk management)?	

From this comparison there emerges a noticeable difference between the two publications. While US doctrine asks *objective* questions, aimed at quantifying resources and activity, UK doctrine asks *subjective* questions, targeted at encouraging the operational

⁵⁰ William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985) p.24.

⁵¹ ADP 1, 3-2.

⁵² FM 3-0, 2-5.

⁵³ ADP 1, 3-5.

commander to understand his environment in a more holistic manner. In the language of this paper, perhaps, US doctrine is more physical in its approach, asking ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions than the intellectually inquisitive nature of the UK’s conceptual approach which leans towards ‘why’ questions. This is put into perspective by the USMC’s MCDP 1-0, *Warfighting*, which encapsulates the concept in its definition of the operational level of war. Note that, in the following excerpt, ends and means are set at a higher, more conceptual, level than the current FM 3-0 perspective.

The operational level of war links the strategic and tactical levels. It is the use of tactical results to attain strategic objectives. The operational level includes deciding when, where and under what conditions to engage the enemy in battle – and when, where and under what conditions to refuse battle – with reference to higher aims. Actions at this level imply a broader dimension of time and space than do tactics. As strategy deals with wars and tactics with battles and engagements, the operational level of war is the art of winning campaigns. Its means are tactical results and its end is the military strategic objective.⁵⁴

Having noted this potential mismatch for future analysis, the simple answer to the question of how linkage is effected by the operational commander is through the looking glass of operational doctrine. The survey therefore established its first question to ask whether the manual is perceived to be set at the strategic, operational or tactical level.

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⁵⁴ MCDP 1-0, in Hayden, *Warfighting*, p.47.

QUESTION ONE RESPONSE

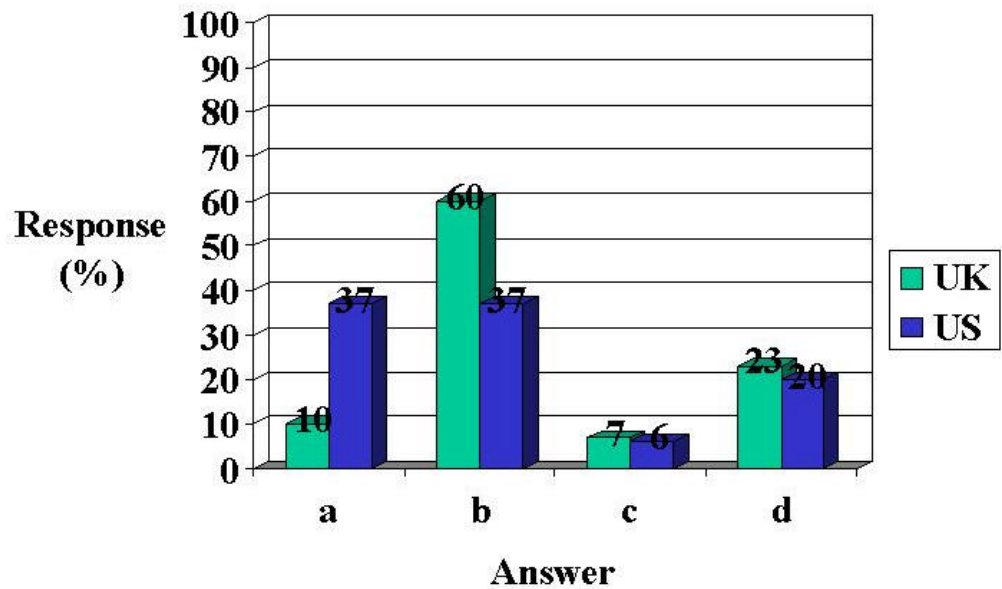


Figure 2. Question One Responses.

This question asked whether respondents believed their army’s operational doctrine was intended for use at the tactical, operational or strategic level of warfare. Both the UK and US armies describe the publications studied as overarching operational doctrine. This would seem to be understood by the target audience, at least among those UK officers surveyed, 60% of whom identified the operational level as appropriate for ADP 1. A further 23% stated that it could be used at all levels of war, perhaps reinforcing the theory that the operational level links strategy and tactics. On the other hand, US opinion was split equally between the tactical and the operational level (37% each), perhaps displaying a lack of clarity in FM 3-0’s stated intent or a lack of understanding of the levels of war on the part of those surveyed.

MANOUEVRE WARFARE

SURVEY QUESTION

I understand Manoeuvre Warfare to be:

- a) *A conceptual approach to warfighting which is about the way in which a force thinks about operations.*
- b) *The physical use of dynamic manoeuvre on the battlefield to focus firepower on the enemy.*

RELEVANCE

During the 1980s, when much was written about the relationship between manoeuvre and attrition, one of the most significant works was published by Richard Simpkin, a career British Army officer who saw active service in the Middle East during the Second World War.

Described in his 1986 obituary in *The Times* as “one of the foremost military thinkers and writers of recent times,”⁵⁵ Simpkin introduced his ideas on manoeuvre warfare which he saw as the only viable concept to face the potential challenges of the twenty-first century. Notably the writer of the foreword to Simpkin’s book was General Don A Starry, US Army, who at the time was the Commander of TRADOC, charged with US doctrinal development. In his theory, Simpkin returns to Clausewitz. The Prussian’s *Vernichtungsprinzip* has been traditionally understood to mean annihilation or attrition theory. Simpkin contends that this was not what Clausewitz intended and that attrition was merely one means by which annihilation of - or decisive victory over – an opponent might be derived. From Clausewitz, Simpkin takes this theory further, however, and adds manoeuvre to the lexicon of thought, believing that the Prussian was moving towards doing so himself in some of his later writings. As evidence, Simpkin points to the development of *Vernichtungsgedanke* by the German Army during the 1930s, a concept that manifested itself in the *Blitzkrieg* successes of 1939 and 1940⁵⁶.

Simpkin defines attrition as, “about fighting and primarily about casualties, though at sea and in the air, and more recently on land, it takes account of materiel losses too. An adherant of this theory of war seeks to achieve a shift of relative strengths in his favour by imposing on the enemy

⁵⁵ Richard E. Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare* (London: Brassey’s, 1985) Author’s notes.

⁵⁶ Ibid. For Simpkin’s thoughts on Blitzkrieg, see Chapter 2, p.19.

a higher casualty rate, or more broadly ‘attrition rate’ than he himself suffers.’⁵⁷ Although wordy, this definition is largely accepted by most commentators. Some, like William Lind, go further, defining it as, “a natural casualty inflicting and absorbing contest where the goal is a favourable exchange rate. This conflict is more physical than mental. Efforts focus on the tactical level with goals set in terms of terrain. Defences tend to be linear, attacks frontal, battles set-piece and movement pre-planned and slow.”⁵⁸ Attrition, therefore, is a tactical effect, which might have operational and strategic consequences – but there again might not. This is one explanation for the US Army’s perceived tactical success but strategic failure in Vietnam, where a policy of attrition did not bring strategic success because of the misunderstanding of the operational environment.

Manoeuvre, on the other hand, is at heart an operational concept. Simpkin says, “Manoeuvre theory, by contrast, regards fighting as only one way of applying military force to the attainment of a politico-economic aim...[It] draws its power mainly from opportunism – the calculated risk, and the exploitation of both chance circumstances and (to borrow a tennis term) from ‘forced and unforced errors’ by the opposition; still more on winning the battle of wills by surprise or, failing this, by speed and aptness of response.”⁵⁹ Charles Oliveiro puts it, “The key to understanding what this style entails is to realise that defeat of an enemy need not always mean physical destruction.”⁶⁰ Manoeuvre warfare is therefore a concept, not a physical action.

Unfortunately, some see manoeuvre differently. US Army officer Major Stephen Hughes, a student at the School of Advanced Military Studies in 1995, wrote, “[While] attrition is

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.20.

⁵⁸ Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, p.7.

⁵⁹ Simpkin, *Race to the Swift*, p.22.

⁶⁰ Oliveiro, “Smaller Can be Better,” p.68.

the reduction of a force caused by loss of personnel and equipment...manoeuvre is the movement of a force in relation to an opposing force.”⁶¹ This definition puts manoeuvre and attrition in the same physical sphere, in a way in which the authors of the manoeuvre approach to warfighting had not intended – doctrinal dissonance! Hughes’ monograph is a crushing blow to the development of doctrine if this is his defining statement. His subject was the examination of the conduct of the Gulf War in 1991 and whether it was manoeuvrist or attritional in nature. To misunderstand the true concept of manoeuvre warfare is a serious and compromising flaw in his work. Hughes is not alone. ‘Manoeuvre’ is mentioned no less than twenty-four times in the current edition of FM 3-0. In the majority of cases, however, this is in a physical context, rather than the conceptual. The first introduction occurs early in the first chapter, which says, “Operational and tactical manoeuvre provides the basis for Army forces to seize and retain the initiative and dictate the terms of land conflict.”⁶² Although this has an element of conceptual application to it, the definition of manoeuvre destroys any such understanding.

Manoeuvre is the employment of forces, through movement combined with fire or fire potential, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy to accomplish the mission.⁶³

This definition belies a very physical approach to manoeuvre, terrain oriented and heavily linked to focusing firepower. In fact, later the manual expressly notes the function of manoeuvre which, it says, “concentrates and disperses combat power.”⁶⁴ Additionally, it breaks manoeuvre down into five forms – envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, penetration and frontal attack – again very linear, very physical. Only once, in an easily overlooked passage in a paragraph entitled ‘Fire and Manoeuvre,’ is manoeuvre raised above a physical capability.

⁶¹ Stephen E. Hughes, *Desert Storm, Attrition or Maneuver?* US Army School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, May 1995. p.3.

⁶² FM 3-0, p 1-5.

⁶³ Ibid, p 4-4.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p 4-14.

Manoeuvre implies more than the use of fire and movement to secure and objective; it aims at the complete overthrow of the enemy's operational design. It requires audacious concepts and ruthless execution.

These observations are important not least because manoeuvre warfare is a headline topic often debated in military circles. The US Army in its current doctrine believes that it is more a physical capability which can be used favourably to focus fires or the threat of fires. This is not a new concept. In his study of the 1976 manual, Leonhard commented, "What FM 100-5 was referring to as manoeuvre was simply the practice of units racing around the battlefield in order to rush into battle."⁶⁵ This could be said to remain a valid observation, despite the fact that, "The US Army had adopted many of the basic concepts of manoeuvre warfare as doctrine...in the 1982 edition of FM 100-5...[and] the Army has begun using the term Manoeuvre Warfare as well."⁶⁶ Neither can the US Army claim to be blind to another interpretation of the role of manoeuvre warfare. The following statement was included by then Colonel Wade Downing in a 1981 article for *Military Review*. Downing went on to become one of the authors of the 1986 version of FM 100-5.

Manoeuvre Warfare is not mobility, nor is it movement. Manoeuvre Warfare, in its essence, positions friendly forces so as to put the enemy forces at maximum disadvantage by forcing the enemy to react to unexpected, unplanned situations which threaten the viability of his military operations. Successful Manoeuvre Warfare presents the adversary with an increasing number of reactionary events which, in their cumulative effect, unravel and unhinge enemy attack or defence.⁶⁷

Once again, on the face of it the UK approach is surprisingly similar to that of the US, but there is one major difference. From the beginning of ADP 1 'manoeuvre warfare' is spoken of as a concept, rather than an activity, although physical manoeuvre is identified as a separate and distinct capability. At the operational level, as a concept, manoeuvre is defined as, "an attitude of

⁶⁵ Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*, p.135.

⁶⁶ See Lind's essay in *Maneuver Warfare; An Anthology*, ed. Hooker, Richard D. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993) p.3.

⁶⁷ Wayne A. Downing, "Firepower, Attrition, Maneuver – US Army Operational Doctrine: A Challenge for the 1980s and Beyond." *Military Review*, Jan/Feb 1997, Vol 77, Issue 1, p.144.

mind which seeks to do nothing less than unhinge the enemy's operational plan.'⁶⁸ This language is almost exactly matched to one of the passages from FM 3-0 quoted above. This difference is that UK doctrine holds this definition as the centerpiece of its operational doctrine, where US doctrine overplays the physical characteristics of manoeuvre and hence leaves a rather different impression in the mind of the reader.

To round out this coverage of Manoeuvre Warfare, an interesting comparison is to be made with the USMC definition of the term.

Manoeuvre Warfare is a warfighting *philosophy* that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope.⁶⁹

With this background, the survey sought to identify whether readers of the respective doctrine were left with the impression of manoeuvre as a physical or conceptual component. Not only does this have implications for their ability to take part in the manoeuvre versus attrition debate, but, if manoeuvre can be identified as conceptual approach to warfighting, it fits with the requirements for operational doctrine identified earlier in this paper. In seeking a conceptual basis for doctrine at the operational level, 'manoeuvre warfare' might be the answer.

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⁶⁸ ADP 1, p.3-17.

⁶⁹ MCDP 1-0, in Hayden, *Warfighting*, p.67. Emphasis added. Use of the word 'philosophy' puts this definition firmly in the conceptual, and therefore the operational realm.

QUESTION TWO RESPONSE

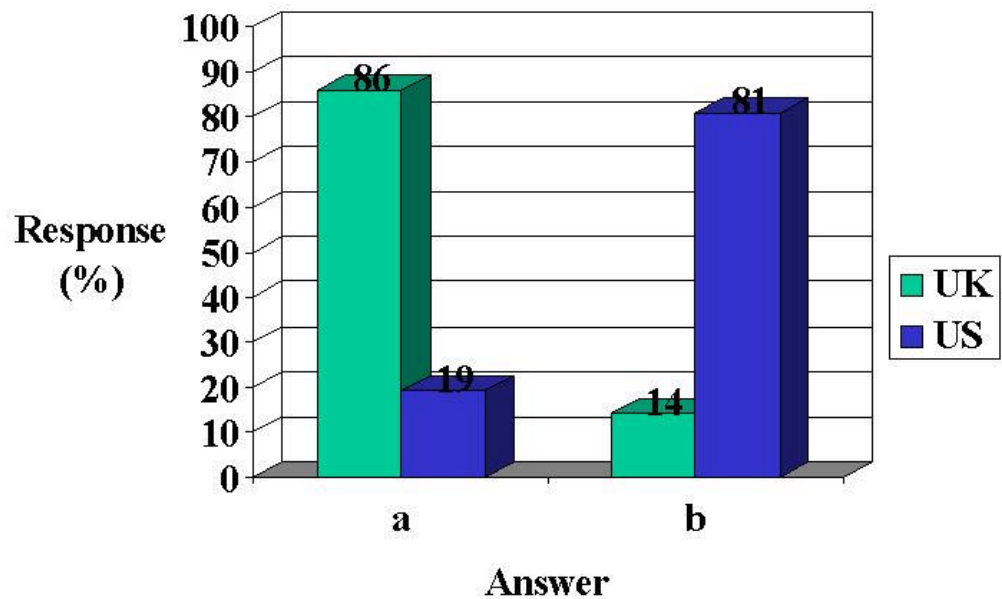


Figure 3. Question Two Responses.

This question sought to identify whether a warfighting concept discussed and to some degree implemented in the doctrine of both the UK and US armies is understood to be an intellectual approach to the battlefield or one of physical practise. The concept of ‘Manoeuvre Warfare’ is also one that is embraced by the USMC, as has been presented earlier in this paper, and therefore has been widely represented in security circles. The graph shows a wide difference of opinion in this matter. 86% of UK officers who took part in the survey indicated their understanding of ‘Manoeuvre Warfare’ as a ‘conceptual approach to warfighting which is about the way in which a force thinks about operations’. In comparison, the majority of US officers surveyed (81%) thought that it was ‘the physical use of dynamic manoeuvre on the battlefield to focus firepower upon the enemy’. This suggests that the UK has identified and codified a conceptual approach to operations that is well described by ADP 1. US officers, however,

translate the concept into practical, battlefield terms and overlook the conceptual value of the model.

DOCTRINAL INTENT

SURVEY QUESTION

I think ADP 1/FM 3-0 is intended to:

- a) Describe how the Army will conduct operations.*
- b) Describe what the Army will do when conducting operations.*
- c) Describe the Army's intellectual approach to conducting operations.*

RELEVANCE

This question directly addresses the role of operational doctrine as introduced in previous chapters. It is open to the subjective appraisal of the respondent, and contains options for him to indicate his understanding of a physical approach (how and what) or a conceptual (intellectual) approach to his nation's operational doctrine.

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QUESTION THREE RESPONSE

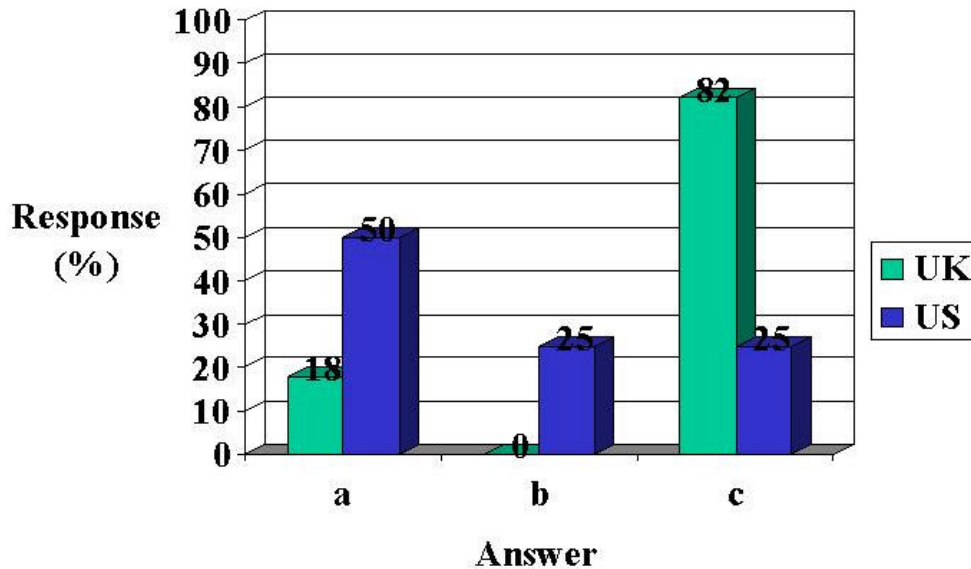


Figure 4. Question Three Responses.

A concept is defined by *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* as, “an abstract idea; a general notion”. Its root is the Latin for a thought, frame of mind or imagination. This would suggest that a doctrine offering a conceptual approach to operations would be more an intellectual construct than the physical description of ‘how’ or ‘what’ and this question addressed that contention. It is interesting to note that 50% of US officers believed that FM 3-0 was intended to ‘describe how the Army will conduct operations’. In addition, a further 25% of US officers said that it aimed to ‘describe what the Army would do when conducting operations’. Conversely, a significant 81% of UK officers thought that ADP 1 was intended to ‘describe the Army’s intellectual approach to conducting operations’. The results from this question suggest that even at the operational level US officers accept more specific direction in their doctrine than their UK colleagues. This proscribes against any conceptual offering to the doctrinal gods, as such an attempt would doubtless be sacrificed on the altar of physical activity.

CENTRE OF GRAVITY

SURVEY QUESTION

At the operational level of war, the Centre of Gravity of an adversary is:

- a) Usually the enemy force array.*
- b) A geographic point which, if held, will prove decisive.*
- c) Any source of enemy psychological strength.*

RELEVANCE

That old friend of the military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, has traditionally taken the credit for coining the term ‘Center of Gravity’.

One must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain centre of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. This the point against which all our energies should be directed.⁷⁰

More recent theorists and doctrine writers have considered the concept of the centre of gravity at great length. ADP 1 defines it as one of a number of concepts of operational design.

The Centre of Gravity is that aspect of the enemy’s overall capability which, if attacked and eliminated, will lead either to his inevitable defeat or his wish to sue for peace through negotiations.⁷¹

In phrasing it in this way, and calling it a concept, the UK Army allows identification of the Centre of Gravity to be dependant upon the commander’s appreciation of the situation. This may or may not be a physical manifestation of the enemy, but might equally be a moral or conceptual component of his fighting power. This is made clear by the sentence, “It is a concept useful mainly at the strategic and operational levels, and even then a Centre of Gravity may be less clear than such a concise definition suggests.”⁷²

FM 3-0’s definition also allows this flexibility of approach.

⁷⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, p.595.

⁷¹ ADP 1, p.3-9.

⁷² Ibid, p 3-11.

Centres of Gravity are those characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight. Destruction or neutralization of the enemy centre of gravity is the most direct path to victory. The enemy will recognise and shield its Centre of Gravity. Therefore, a direct approach may be costly and sometimes futile. Commanders examine many approaches, direct and indirect, to the enemy Centre of Gravity.⁷³

Clausewitz' legacy also suggested that the enemy Centre of Gravity was usually its army or its capital. Little work exists addressing moral or conceptual centres of gravity which is available to fuel any debate. Little work, that is until the publication of a USMC paper written by Dr Joe Strange of the Marine Corps War College. Strange noted that the concept of Centres of Gravity provided a focus for planners in their efforts to achieve a given end state. This excellent monograph, which lifts the idea into the conceptual realm, suggests, "we should step beyond the generic 'look, move, shoot and communicate' capabilities which are common to most military forces/units and ask the \$64,000 question: 'Precisely what is it that a particular enemy force (moral or physical) can do to prevent us from accomplishing our mission in this particular situation/context?'"⁷⁴ In 'looking beyond,' Strange returns to Clausewitz' description of Centres of Gravity and identifies a conceptual overtone upon which he develops his own theories of attacking the enemy's will through identification of physical or moral sources of psychological strength.

The question posed in the survey therefore seeks to discover whether respondents understand Centres of Gravity as iterated by their respective country's doctrine, to be conceptual or physical in outline.

⁷³ FM 3-0, p5-7.

⁷⁴ Dr J. Strange, "Centres of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities," United States Marine Corps University, *Perspectives on Warfighting*, Number 4.

QUESTION FOUR RESPONSE

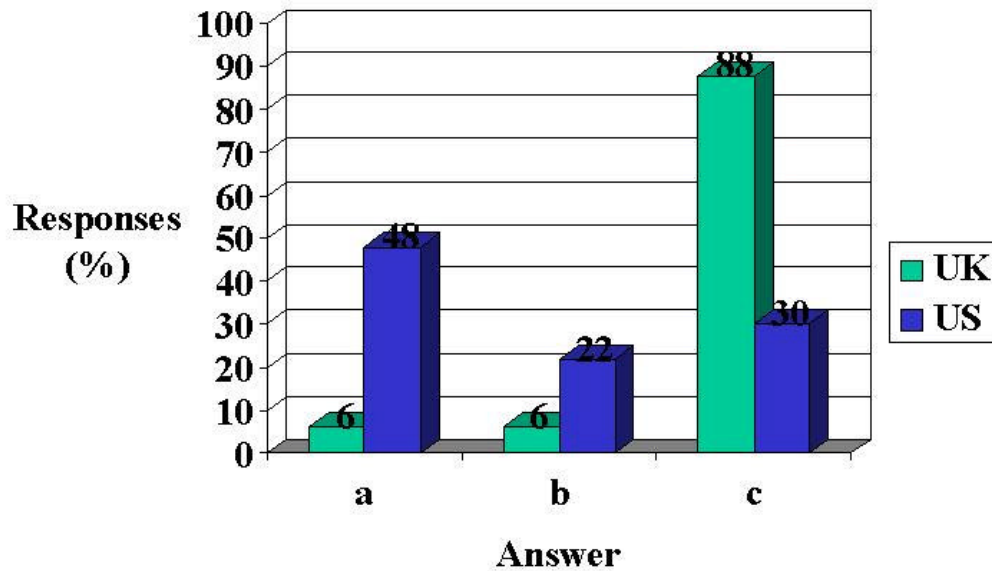


Figure 5. Question Four Responses.

While opinion was split amongst US respondents to this question, nearly half thought that, at the operational level of war, the Centre of Gravity of an adversary is ‘usually the enemy force array.’ Although this might correspond with Clausewitz’ statement that one should think in terms of the enemy force, his capital or an important allied force, it has little utility past actual warfighting. How could a force array be applied to a humanitarian peace support operation other than in terms of the provision of intimate security, for example? For true utility across the spectrum of conflict, perhaps a more generic and holistic approach is more suitable. This might be offered by the overwhelming majority of UK officers surveyed, who stated that, ‘any source of enemy psychological strength’ was more acceptable to their doctrinally adjusted mindset. A purer answer might have been “all three and more”!

LINES OF OPERATION

SURVEY QUESTION

At the operational level of war, I understand the phrase 'lines of operation' to mean:

- a) The physical linkage of friendly force progress from its home base towards closing with the enemy.*
- b) The conceptual linkage of inter-agency actions within a campaign towards a common objective or set of objectives.*

RELEVANCE

The inclusion of lines of operation in the survey reflects the development of the concept by the US Army in the current version of FM 3-0. The manual deals extensively with two approaches to the construction of such lines that, it says, “define the directional orientation of the force in time and space in relation to the enemy. They connect the force with its base of operations and its objectives.”⁷⁵ This appears to be rather a physical construct, especially when supported by the detail that, “lines of operation may be either interior or exterior. A force operates on interior lines when its operations diverge from a central point...[and] a force operates on exterior lines when its operations converge on the enemy.”⁷⁶ This is now a *purely* physical relationship, is difficult to apply across the spectrum of conflict and not new. The concept of geographical lines of operation has also been around since Clausewitz’ time. The new FM 3-0, however, develops the idea of *logical* lines of operation, raising them to a truly conceptual level.

When positional reference to an enemy or adversary has little relevance, commanders may visualise the operation along logical lines... Commanders link multiple objectives and actions with the logic of purpose – cause and effect... Logical lines of operation also help commanders visualise how military means can support nonmilitary instruments of national power.⁷⁷

UK doctrine deals with the concept in an entirely opposite manner.

⁷⁵ FM 3-0, p5-7.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p 5-8.

⁷⁷ FM 3-0, p 5-9.

Lines of operation describe how military force is applied in time and space through decisive points on the path to the Centre of Gravity. Lines of operation are not synonymous with physical axes of advance... Trying to respond to multiple lines of operation overloads the enemy commander...⁷⁸

Only after this passage does ADP 1 note that traditional lines of operation are physical and either interior or exterior.

With these two approaches in mind, the survey aimed to identify whether respondents thought their country's definition of lines of operation was primarily conceptual or physical in nature.

QUESTION FIVE RESPONSE

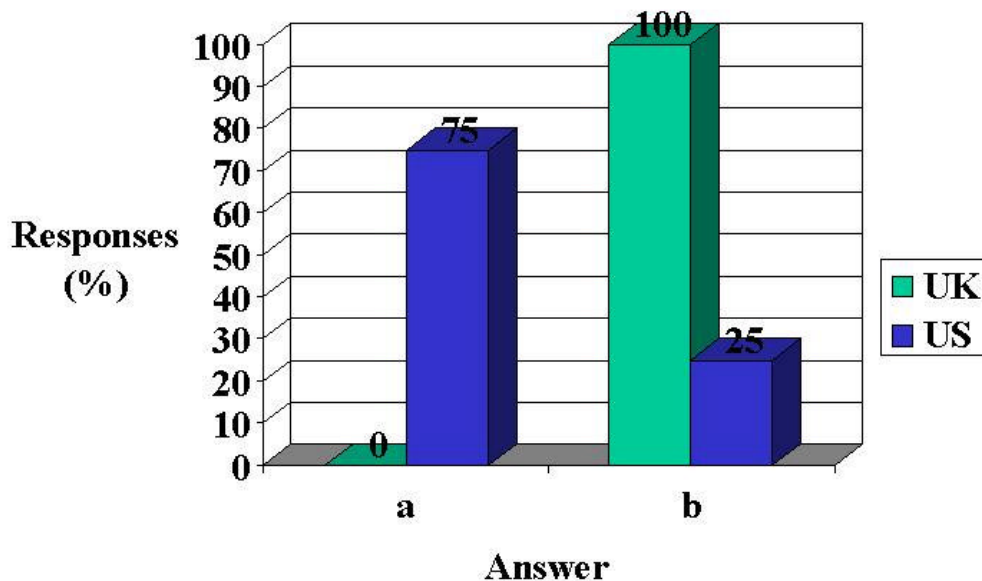


Figure 6. Question Five Responses.

There was a stark difference of national opinion when the question of lines of operation was introduced. Every UK officer who responded identified ADP 1's meaning of the phrase as, 'the conceptual linkage of inter-agency actions within a campaign towards a common objective or set of objectives'. In comparison, most US officers were drawn towards describing them as, 'the physical linkage of friendly force progress from its home base towards closing with the enemy'.

⁷⁸ ADP 1, p 3-14.

This discloses a physical approach to the issue to be more comfortable to the US audience, despite the fact that the two nations' armies deal with the issue of lines of operation in fairly similar manner in their current publications. Lines of operation, as first defined by Jomini, have played a vital part in operational planning throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is little value in prolonging their employment in a strict, geographical sense in the contemporary operating environment that is characterised by a non-contiguous, non-linear battlefield framework and that a conceptual approach is needed at the operational level. Evidently this is not present in the interpretation of current US Army doctrine which clings to geography to portray battlefield relationships.

THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

SURVEY QUESTION

The concept of 'deep, close and rear' operations is best described as:

- a) *'Deep' is the enemy's rear area, 'close' is where the fight is and 'rear' is the friendly force's communications zone.*
- b) *'Deep' is the adversary's linkage to its power base, 'close' is where I can influence the current environment directly and 'rear' is the linkage of friendly forces to their Centre of Gravity.*

RELEVANCE

The Operational Framework is the means by which the commander visualizes his area of interest and the relationship one to the others of those elements under his command. In the British Army this is done through the identification of 'deep, close and rear' elements or activities. This concept, "helps the commander relate friendly forces to one another, and to the enemy, in terms of time, space, resources and *purpose*."⁷⁹ The functional definitions of the various operations are designed to encourage an intellectual approach to battlefield relationships as follows:

Deep Operations – "keep the enemy from his objectives and constrain his freedom of action."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ ADP I, p 5-11. Emphasis added.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p 5-13.

Close Operations - “Their purpose is primarily to strike the enemy in order to eliminate a discrete part of his combat power; the means range widely from destruction to arrest.”⁸¹

Rear Operations – “...both increase the overall depth of operations and provide the resources to vary the tempo of operations. Their purpose is to ensure freedom of action by...retaining freedom of manoeuvre. They are not synonymous with combat service support operations, but are much wider in scope.”⁸²

FM 3-0 decrees that operations should be defined purely by purpose, and adopts the terms decisive, shaping and sustaining to describe ‘battlefield organisation’.⁸³ However, “when circumstances require a spatial reference, commanders describe their AO in terms of deep, close and rear areas. These spatial categories are especially useful in operations that are generally contiguous and linear and feature a clearly defined enemy force.”⁸⁴ This latter concept has been included in many previous versions of US Army operational doctrine and is a familiar way of depicting the physical battle space to most serving US officers.

The question seeks to demonstrate that, if the context is correct, concepts can be understood even when defined in ostensibly rather physical language. It also illustrates the potentially different meanings of the same terms to two allied organizations purporting to employ the same doctrine.

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⁸¹ Ibid, p5-14.

⁸² Ibid, p5-16.

⁸³ *FM 3-0*, p 4-22.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

QUESTION SIX RESPONSE

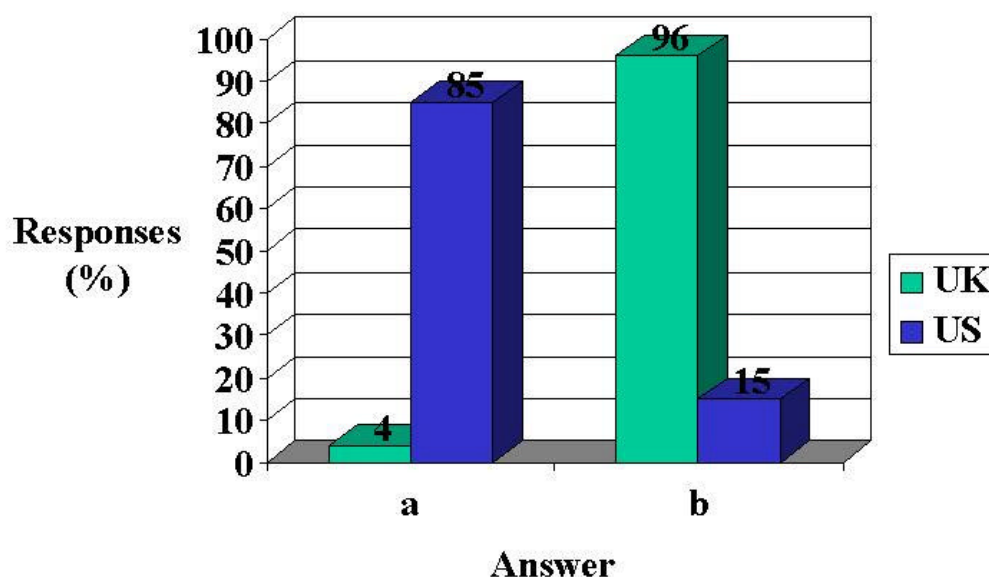


Figure 7. Question Six Responses.

Another difference of opinion was manifest by the results to the question of how ‘deep, close and rear operations’ might be best described. For the American officer this is a strictly geographic application through which to understand the battlefield framework. The British Army has evidently succeeded in conceptualising the concept, however, with ‘deep, close and rear’ being analogous to the USMC definitions of shaping, decisive and supporting functions. In this way the framework can be truly applied across the spectrum of conflict and at all levels of war. For example, when UK forces moved into Kosovo in June 1999, the accompanying artillery regiment assumed responsibility for ‘deep operations’. This did not imply the threat of indirect fire missions on retreating Serbian forces, but shaping the operational environment by locating and liaising with the Kosovo Liberation Army in order to ‘neutralise’ a potentially volatile influence.⁸⁵ This role was taken on by 4 Regiment, Royal Artillery without question, it having

⁸⁵ The writer of this monograph served with Headquarters, 4th (UK) Armoured Brigade during 1997 to 1999; this observation comes from his recollection of the formation’s operational concept during the NATO deployment into Kosovo in June 1999.

made the intellectual leap through a sound understanding of the true nature of UK doctrine's 'deep, close and rear' framework.

MAIN EFFORT

SURVEY QUESTION

The UK's/US's operational doctrine:

- a) *Allows the 'main effort' to be changed during an operation.*
- b) *Does not allow the 'main effort' to be changed during an operation.*
- c) *Allows the 'main effort' to be changed, but only with specific, detailed instructions from the senior commander.*

RELEVANCE

The concept of 'main effort' originated in the Clausewitzian principle of *Schwerpunktbildung*. Its literal meaning is 'heavy point' and the great Prussian introduced it to illustrate its action in providing a focal point for mass leading to a break in the enemy lines during an engagement. During World War II German forces developed the utility of this central idea to produce an understanding of the concentration of effort demanded by a particular operational situation. Used in this way the term is valid for each level of war. William Lind seized on the concept during the 1980s as he developed his treatise on Manoeuvre Warfare, suggesting that, if subordinate commanders were to be granted more independence and could rely more on their own initiative and understanding of their local situation, the Main Effort provided a central idea for planning.⁸⁶ In other words, it provided a conceptual foundation for planning and execution.

Both British and US operational doctrine enshrines the concept of Main Effort. The British Army defines it as, "a concentration of forces or means...where a commander seeks to bring about a decision. It is a concept to provide a focus for activity which a commander

⁸⁶ For a lecture by Lind on the importance of the Main Effort, see his *Manoeuvre Warfare Handbook*, p.107.

considers crucial to the success of his mission”.⁸⁷ This definition highlights the approach of using the designation of a main effort as a conceptual tool to provide a commonly understood framework for an operation. The US Army treats the issue in similar fashion, saying, “the main effort is the activity, unit or area that commanders determine constitutes the most important task at that time. Commanders weight the main effort with resources and priorities and shift it as circumstances and intent demand.”⁸⁸ Both forces allow the local commander to shift his main effort as he believes suits the changing circumstances of his operational environment, noting only that this must be nested with those main efforts designated by higher and lower organisations. Limiting the usefulness of the concept by requiring detailed permission to be given from higher headquarters in order to shift a unit’s designated main effort restricts the need for that unit to acquire a conceptual understanding of the operation.

This question tests doctrinal understanding, as both nations’ doctrine explicitly allows the main effort to be shifted without specific, detailed instruction. Further, unless commanders feel that they are able to shift the focus of their own operation as the situation dictates, then they must also feel that they do not need a conceptual understanding of the operation in order to execute the mission, relying on prescribed tactics, techniques and procedures to carry out detailed orders.

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⁸⁷ *ADP 2*, p.8-C-1.

⁸⁸ *FM 3-0*, p4-25.

QUESTION SEVEN RESPONSE

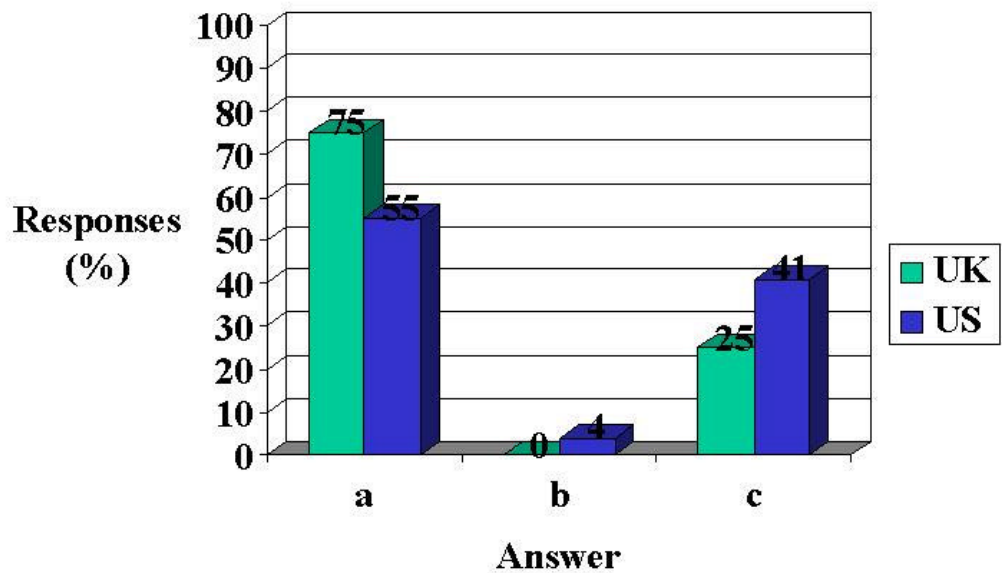


Figure 8. Question Seven Responses.

Both the UK and US armies’ operational doctrine makes allowance for the stated Main Effort to be shifted buy the commander depending upon his assessment of his immediate situation. Such measures must always be nested by higher formations, of course, but the contingency remains. The majority of both nation’s officers who responded to the survey recognised this facility but it is of note that a significant minority – over one third - of US officers believed that the Main Effort could only be shifted following ‘specific, detailed instructions from the senior commander.’ This acceptance of precise direction negates the necessity for a commander to develop an holistic understanding of his environment and allows him to be locked into his tactical surroundings at the expense of a more conceptual appreciation of the situation.

TASK AND PURPOSE

SURVEY QUESTION

What is more important to you as a commander?

a) *Your designated task.*

- b) *Your designated purpose.*
- c) *The commander's intent you received from higher.*

RELEVANCE

This very simple question gives insight into the subject's ability to look beyond his defined task, with its potential constraints and specificity, to the overarching concept of an operation. Both UK and US doctrine encourages the employment of 'mission command'. This is an intellectual framework that seeks to allow "subordinates the greatest possible freedom to act...[the assignment of] tasks to subordinates without specifying how to accomplish them."⁸⁹ Put simply, if the concept of the operation is clear, then the task becomes subordinate to the purpose, and perhaps the purpose subordinate to the overall intent.

In the author's experience, much debate is entered into about the relative applicability of the task verbs 'defeat' or 'destroy' to a given operational scenario. This degree of definition often comes instead of a true understanding of the operational environment, which would, if present, itself define the problem. One explanation as to why this perennial debate should be entered into so often is that, in the absence of a conceptual construct from which perspective to view the problem in hand, the difference between defeat and destroy - in terms of what is involved in putting that activity into practice – *becomes the concept*. There is definitely a difference between the effort and effect needed for the task of 'defeat' against that for 'destroy'. Thus, without conceptual doctrine to provide a link, tactics becomes *the* method of achieving strategic aims. There is, simply, a missing link.

⁸⁹ FM 3-0, p4-15.

QUESTION EIGHT RESPONSE

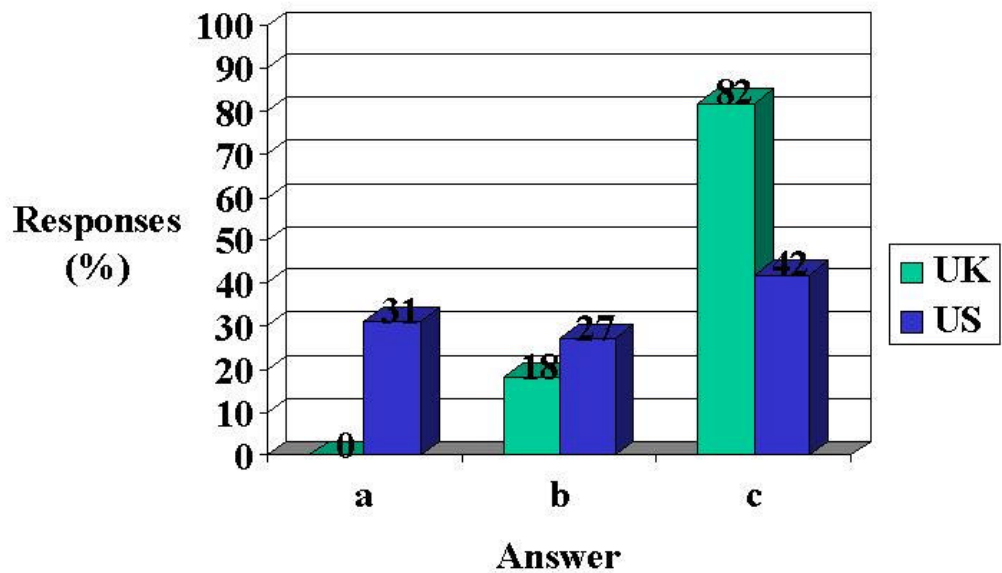


Figure 9. Question Eight Responses.

The perceived relationship between a given task and its purpose is key to discovering whether an individual is content to act within strictly defined parameters without understanding the reason why something must be achieved. Without a strong sense of purpose, the task becomes a reason in itself and when the complex battlefield with its attendant fog and friction exerts its influence might constrain activity to the extent where innovation becomes impossible and flexibility a vain hope. Both US and UK officers surveyed noted the importance of the purpose, the majority going one step further in saying that their most important direction came from ‘the commander’s intent received from higher’. Of some concern, however, is the fact that nearly one third of US officers thought that the task was the most important component in governing one’s action.

THE COMPONENTS OF FIGHTING POWER

SURVEY QUESTION

Into which generic area would you say ADPI/FM 3-0 orients its reader?

- a) *The moral domain.*
- b) *The physical domain.*
- c) *The conceptual domain.*

RELEVANCE

As outlined in Chapter One of this paper a number of theorists have addressed the compency of fighting power. FM 3-0 makes no attempt to take up the issue, unlike the UK's ADP 1. This question was included to gain an understanding of whether officers observe a physical or conceptual approach to their nation's operational doctrine (as it is unlikely they would expect a moral perspective!).

QUESTION NINE RESPONSE

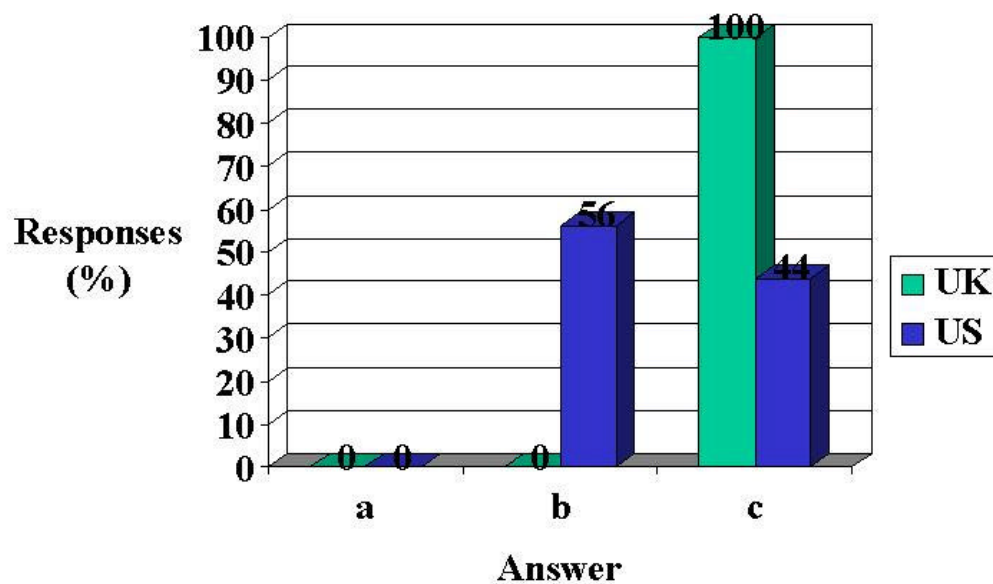


Figure 10. Question Nine Responses.

Question Nine constituted one of the most straightforward but nonetheless important questions in the survey. Both UK and US operational doctrine sets out to present an overarching conceptual approach from which tactical techniques and procedures can be developed. This is

clearly recognised by those UK officers who responded, all of whom said that the UK Army's operational doctrine oriented its user to the conceptual domain of fighting power. Although a significant number of US officers recognised the same intent in FM 3-0, over half believed that its predominant orientation was to the physical domain.

THE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT I

SURVEY QUESTION

On balance, do you think ADP 1/FM 3-0 has more utility for:

- a) Warfighting.*
- b) Peace Operations.*
- c) Any military operation.*

RELEVANCE

It is a core contention of this paper that an operational doctrine should have utility across the spectrum of conflict. Indeed, that is exactly the concept that is enshrined in the US Army's 'bumper-sticker', *Full Spectrum Operations*. This question seeks to discover whether British and US operational doctrine is understood as being conceptual and therefore flexible to a variety of situations and environments or whether it is translated as being specific to a particular area of the spectrum, such as warfighting.

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QUESTION TEN RESPONSE

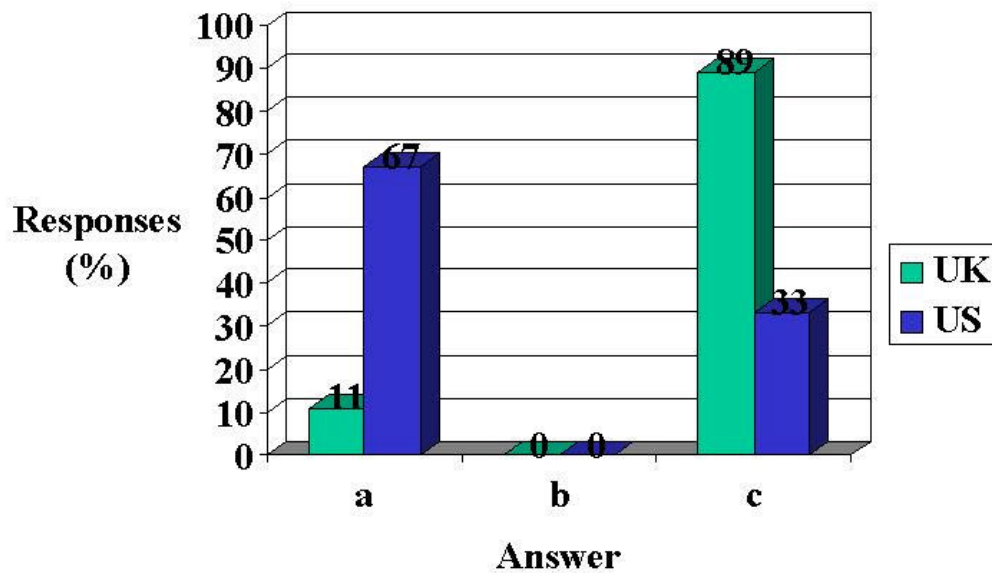


Figure 11. Question Ten Responses.

The US Army's FM 3-0, Operations, is termed 'Full Spectrum Operations'. Over two thirds of US officers polled, however, thought that its value was to 'warfighting' to the exclusion of 'peace operations' or 'any military operation'. Clearly, on this evidence, its utility is severely limited to true application across the spectrum of conflict. On the other hand the vast majority of UK officers surveyed indicated their understanding of the UK Army's publication ADP 1 as suitable for use in any military operation. This latter perception is surely the proper hallmark for an overarching concept of operations that can be applied in a wide variety of situations.

THE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT II

SURVEY QUESTION

ADP 1/FM3-0 seeks to:

- a) *Focus fire and manoeuvre in order to mass decisive force on the enemy.*
- b) *Enable identification and isolation of enemy weaknesses that can subsequently be attacked appropriately.*

RELEVANCE

The choices available by which to answer this question are either of a physical nature, grounded in tactical decision, or a conceptual nature, linked to taking advantage of the operational environment. There was a third choice available to all who took part in the survey – to choose neither a) nor b) but a third phrase that they were free to contribute in their own words. Choice a) is attritional, a physical effect that is important in warfighting but of course has a lesser value further across the spectrum of conflict. Choice b) is a concept that can be applied to all possible environments depending upon the classification and definition of ‘enemy’.

The question is important is discerning whether the implications of the comparable manuals’ method of presentation orient upon physical or more conceptual effects being generated by friendly forces upon an adversary.

QUESTION ELEVEN RESPONSE

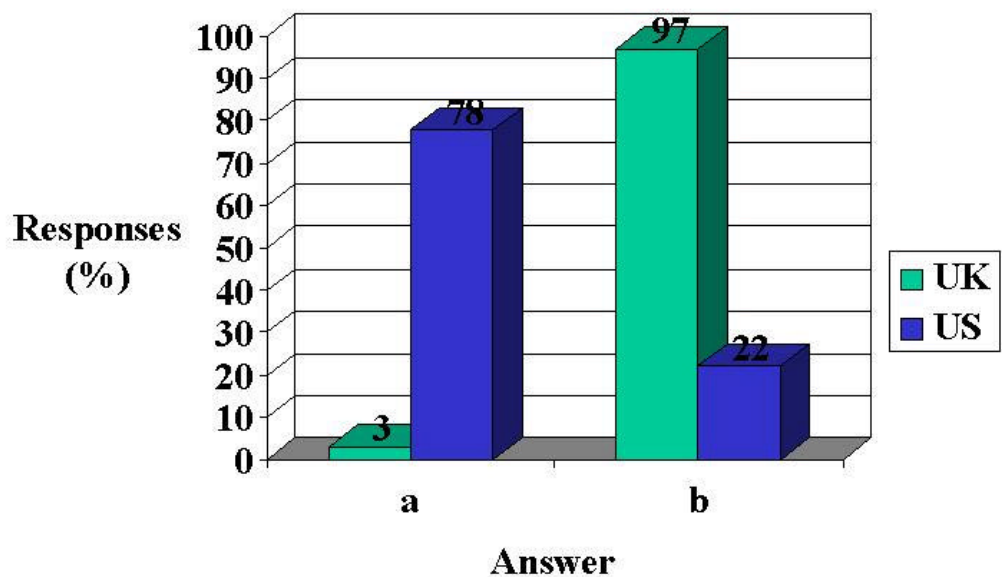


Figure 12. Question Eleven Responses.

This question returns to the relationship between activity and thought. This paper has sought to illustrate a balance between the tactical and the operational levels characterised by the

amount of activity and thought inherent in an organisation's approach to its environment at each level. At the tactical level, there will be more activity and, in comparison, less intellectual strife. This is seen in reverse at the operational level which sets the conditions for tactics in linking them to strategy. Therefore, if an operational concept is described as seeking to, 'focus fire and manoeuvre in order to mass decisive force on the enemy,' then it is intellectually deficient, especially in other circumstances than actual warfighting. Against this background it is interesting to note that an astonishing number of US officers who responded to the survey thought that FM 3-0 had precisely this physical focus. Therefore, the concept of US operational doctrine is activity, the antithesis of an intellectual approach. Conversely, only one UK officer failed to state that ADP 1 sought to identify enemy weakness that might be exploited – an intellectual approach to operations.

THE COMMAND ESTIMATE

SURVEY QUESTION

What is the most crucial phase of the command estimate/MDMP?

- a) Mission Analysis.*
- b) Course of action comparison.*
- c) Wargaming.*
- d) Other (please describe).*

RELEVANCE

Both the UK and US armies offer well defined decision-making tools to their field commanders that are embedded in operational doctrine. The UK version, called *The Estimate*, has 4 stages – mission analysis, evaluation of factors, consideration of courses of action and the commander's decision. Of these, mission analysis is designated the key stage as it seeks to set activity in context so that detailed planning can take place against a true understanding of the

higher commander's intent and the implications of the operating environment.⁹⁰ This could be said to be the conceptual underpinning for physical activity and the contribution of mission analysis to be vital to linking tactical actions to the operational effect required.

The US Army's *Military Decision Making Process* (MDMP) has seven steps, with mission analysis being the second. Here, too, the aim is to translate the received order into a shared visualization of the battlespace and is described as a critical stage of the MDMP. While the British Army's mission analysis is further divided into four parts, that of the US Army has four times that number, seventeen in all.⁹¹ As doctrine allows some of these steps to be missed depending upon time constraints, there may be a natural tendency to focus on some of the more mechanistic products of this process such as the listing of assets, constraints, facts, assumptions, risks and information requirements rather than intellectual analysis resulting in holistic understanding of the environment. If this is true, then the argument is framed to suggest that the stated importance of mission analysis may be missed by operators more intent on producing a plan for execution based only on received instructions rather than a complete understanding of their circumstances.

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⁹⁰ See ADP 2, p.8-6.

⁹¹ See United States Army Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Organisation and Operations*, pp.5-5 to 5-11.

QUESTION TWELVE RESPONSE

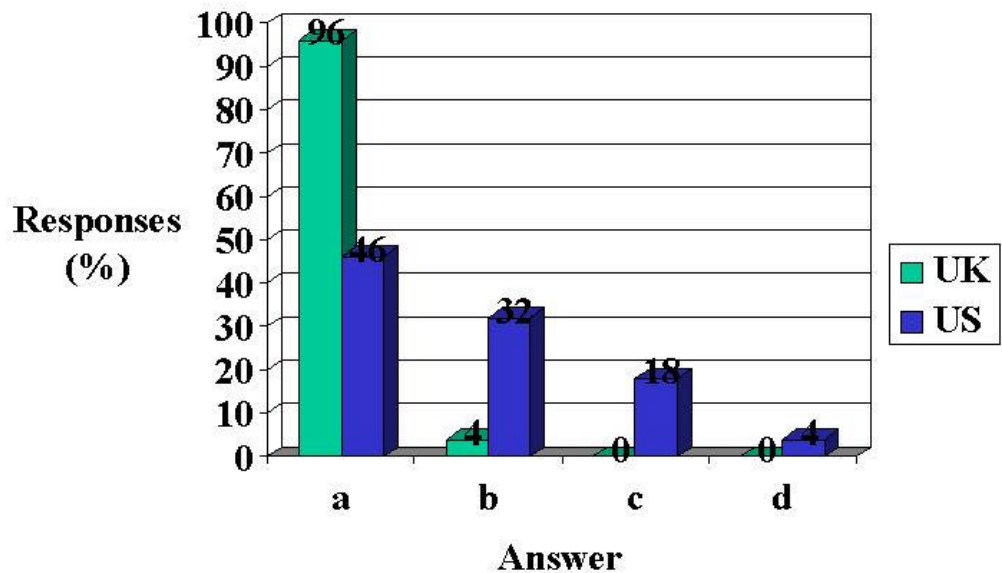


Figure 13. Question Twelve Responses.

In considering UK and US operational doctrine it can be seen that both nations’ armies place a high importance on a thorough and complete understanding of the situation and its requirements before planning can really begin. This is squarely borne out by the answers of UK officers who responded almost to a man that ‘mission analysis’ was the most important phase of military planning. There was more widespread opinion amongst US officers, 50% of whom considered the more practical steps of ‘course of action comparison’ and ‘wargaming’ combined to be the most critical. This indicates that US officers give significantly more credence to practical measures which can be empirically developed than to an osmotic understanding of their circumstances. Therefore it is concluded that, during planning, US doctrine leans towards physical application of actions than the intellectual process that underpins them.

A GAME OF CHESS?

SURVEY QUESTION

In a game of chess, what would you designate a player’s centre of gravity?

- a) *The King.*
- b) *The Queen.*
- c) *Other (please specify).*

RELEVANCE

Back to the hoary old chestnut of centres of gravity! This question is wholly inspired by Robert Leonhard and his book *The Art of Maneuver*.⁹² As Carl von Clausewitz likened warfare to a game of cards, Leonhard envisions a game of chess. His reasoning describes the parallel examples of tempo, mobility, anticipation and the necessity for operational/tactical linkage in terms of effects and their relationship to actions taken. The answer to the question posed, “will in effect determine [the respondent’s] approach to attrition and manoeuvre theory”:⁹³ Leonhard explains it thus,

When I first considered this question, I hastily concluded...that the centre of gravity in a game of chess must be the strongest piece, the queen. Remove the queen and the opponent has suffered a terrible reduction in his ‘warfighting capabilities’. And indeed, as my friend pointed out, usually when he captured the queen, he won the game – but not always. Greater reflection revealed our flawed thinking... Destruction or neutralisation of the centre of gravity must not result merely in reduction of his capabilities but rather the paralysis of his forces. The answer then becomes obvious: the opponent’s centre of gravity is his king. By no means the strongest piece, the king is the one piece whose neutralisation ends the war!⁹⁴

The question was included in the study to illustrate the respondent’s overarching perspective on warfighting. If Leonhard’s argument that chess is a useful simulation of warfare is considered reasonable, then the analogy applies to the way those involved think about the way they approach its challenges. If they elect to address the strength of the opposing queen as vital to their success, then they could be described as proponents of the physical component of warfighting. Conversely, choosing the king portrays an attempt to influence an opponent’s

⁹² Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*.

⁹³ Ibid, p21.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

weaknesses in seeking his paralysis – a more conceptual, intellectual approach that tries to avoid simply matching strength for strength.

QUESTION THIRTEEN RESPONSE

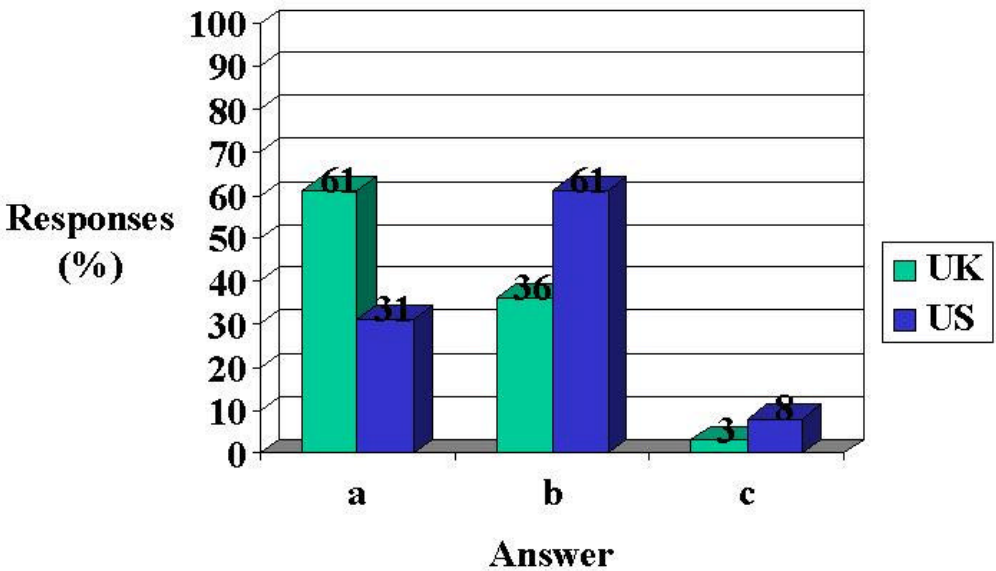


Figure 14. Question Thirteen Responses.

The final difference of opinion was in the matter of whether the king or the queen was believed to be the centre of gravity for a chess player in his simulated combat operations. By coincidence, both parties were exactly equal in their representation. The majority of UK officers who responded to the survey indicated their preference for the king, linked as it is with a weaker provision of psychological power to one side or the other. A matching 61% of US officers responded that the queen would be their stated centre of gravity, aligned as she is with significant potential for power projection and without which a player is weakened but not defeated. If planning and execution is to be focused on addressing the centre of gravity, as recommended by both the UK and US armies, then US officers would seem to be more willing to match force with force in an attrition battle than their UK counterparts who would be more inclined to exploit weakness to cause paralysis. But then, chess is only a game...

CREDIBILITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Question Fourteen:

I have read ADP 1/FM 3-0:

- a) Regularly and am very familiar with its content.*
- b) When necessary and I have a passing acquaintance with its content.*
- c) Rarely or never and I do not feel confident in interpreting its content.*

Question Fifteen:

My branch is:

- a) Combat.*
- b) Combat Support.*
- c) Combat Service Support.*

The survey was conducted in December 2002 and January 2003. Respondents took part anonymously, being selected randomly through a computer generated process run with the assistance of the staff at the US and UK staff colleges. It was necessary to assess the degree of credibility of the answers, however, and this was done through questions aimed at assessing respondents' acquaintance with and perceived understanding of their army's doctrine and recording their branch of service.

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QUESTION FOURTEEN RESPONSE

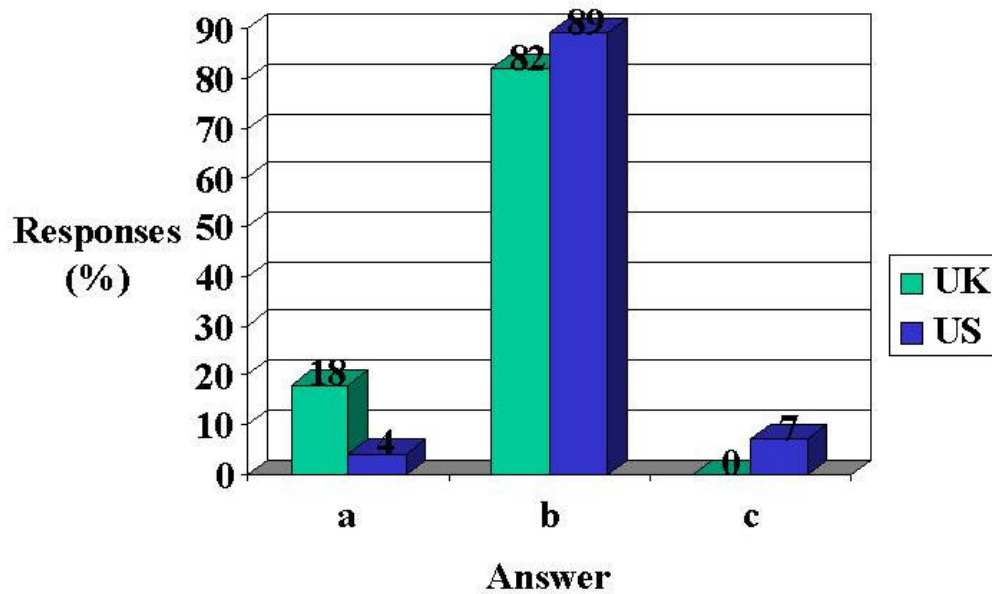


Figure 15. Question Fourteen Responses.

Most respondents, from both the UK and US armies, admitted to reading their operational doctrine ‘when necessary’ and having ‘a passing acquaintance with its content. It would seem to be even more important that the perception left by ‘a passing acquaintance’ is an accurate reflection of the authors’ intent. This is underlined by Major Daniel Bolger, a US Army infantry officer – now Colonel promotable - who has served with a variety of field formations as well as instructed at West Point. The author of several books, including *Americans at War 1975-1986*; *An Era of Violent Peace*, Bolger earned a PhD in history from Chicago University and so is a credible commentator who made the following note in an essay published in 1993.

Not that it matters all that much what the manuals say. Written doctrine only goes so far. In the US Army, where doctrinal books typically serve to hold doors open and justify extra shelving, hardly anybody really reads the doctrine. No surprise there – most of the doctrinal literature is stultifying and grossly redundant, forever being redrafted and reorganised. It tells you in grave terms what you already know, then furnishes handy laundry lists best summarised by Rogers’ Rangers as ‘Don’t forget nothing’.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *Maneuver Warfare; An Anthology*, p.33.

This rather depressing doctrinal soliloquy is, this paper contends, all the more reason for operational doctrine to generate easily understandable concepts that translate strategy into tactics through intellectual rigour against the background of the situation of the moment. The opposite result is doctrinal dissonance and operational dislocation.

QUESTION FIFTEEN RESPONSE

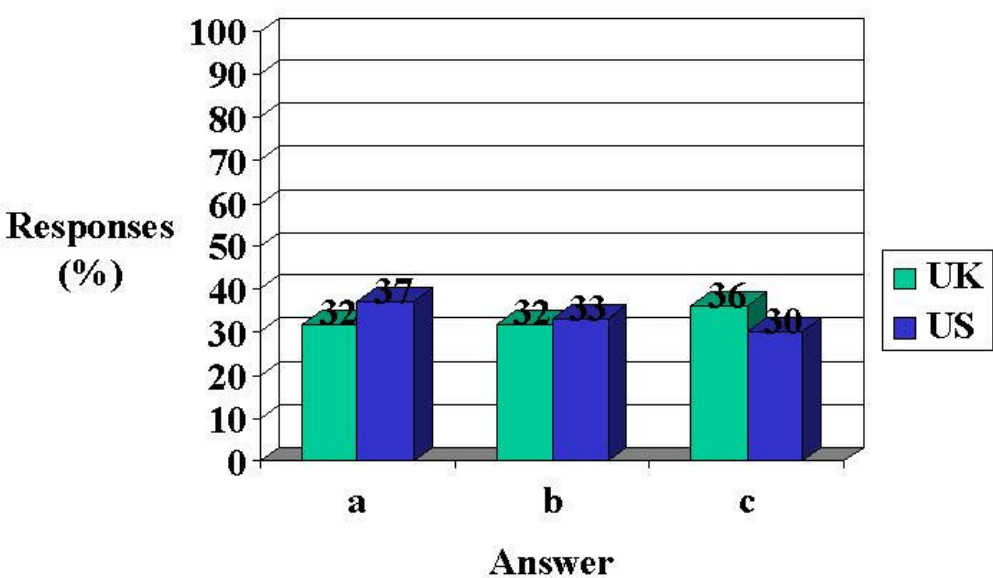


Figure 16. Question Fifteen Responses.

Despite their being chosen at random, responses from service components were similar in the UK and US population distributions. Exactly the same number of responses was elicited from UK officers in combat or combat support roles, while the slight majority were combat service support officers. In the US population, the slight advantage was to combat arms; with 33% combat support and 30% combat service support. No inference can be drawn from this even distribution.

SUMMARY

With the help of experts at the US Army Command and General Staff College, the author constructed a credible and appropriately structured survey to act as a litmus test for the depth of understanding prevalent in UK and US army doctrine. Targeting facets of operational design present in the operational doctrine of both armies enabled a picture to emerge that highlighted generally held perceptions of the practical utility of those concepts. Although the survey population was not large, the extensive work that established the format of the survey ensured that its results presented obvious and significant indicators of more widely held beliefs and understanding. Further research might be focused on particular aspects of this survey but its initial findings indicate that the US Army has failed to produce operational doctrine of conceptual worth that is applicable across the spectrum of conflict, a statement that cannot be made about its UK colleagues.

If it is true that the conceptual component of fighting power binds the moral to the physical, and that the operational level of war links the strategic to the tactical, it can be said that doctrine at the operational level must be conceptual in nature. From the fundamental test of perception and understanding that has been the challenge of this survey it appears that, although the need has been identified by the US Army, the aspiration to field such doctrine has fallen short of achievement. The originality of taking a snapshot of interpretation in this manner has exposed the basic absence of an operational concept in US Army doctrine. Because of the structured way in which the survey was produced, and the level of educated exposure and experience that should be expected from its respondents, such a warning surely cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter of his seminal treatise on modern military theory, Richard Simpkin rues what he sees as the demise of creativity on the battlefield, saying, “It is to the ‘reformist’ movement in the United States Army that one must look for innovation. [The 1982] *Field Manual 100-5 Operations*, promulgating a switch from attrition theory to manoeuvre theory, is a very good start.”⁹⁶ From its brief examination of current published doctrine and its consequent understanding in the US Field Army, this paper concludes that the US Army’s capstone doctrine has not moved far enough during the last twenty years in implementing this or any other concept to stand as its overarching approach to operations. Such conceptual underpinning is noticeably absent and therefore there is no common frame of reference for tactical operators apart from applying massed hardware against the enemy wherever possible.

There is no doubt that the writers of FM 3-0 intended to produce overarching conceptual doctrine for use at the operational level of war. In securing this intention, the value to the organisation has been identified by this paper as offering a linkage between strategy and tactics and across the spectrum of conflict. Unfortunately, the research survey carried out does not support an understanding of this intent by those officers who are charged with putting the doctrine into practise. Most US officers who responded to the survey thought that the current edition of FM 3-0 has more utility for warfighting than other military operations and that its purpose is to describe how the Army will conduct its activities. This is not a very conceptual approach to full spectrum operations. Most of the US responses put its officers’ understanding of its doctrine in the physical sphere, and therefore, by the definition of this paper, at the tactical level. Further, specific components of US doctrine, such as centres of gravity, lines of operation and the battlefield framework, were all revealed to be perceived to be governed by physical

determinants, such as the presence of fielded forces and the influence of geography. This suggests that these components are treated not so much as conceptual aids to understanding as physical tools to be utilised to dictate action. It also limits their use in the contemporary operating environment. One particular question in this survey asked whether FM 3-0 oriented its reader to the physical, conceptual or moral domain. While 100% of UK officers who responded believed that ADP1 is pitched at the conceptual arena, the authors of FM 3-0 might be disturbed by the 56% of US officers who said that it lay in the physical realm.

In contrast it appears that there is significant linkage between intent and perception in the British Army with respect to its operational doctrine, published in ADP 1. Applicable to all military operations, wholly appropriate to the operational level of war and, as we have seen, oriented to the conceptual domain, it would seem that authors and operators alike have achieved a link between tactics and strategy and across the spectrum that can be clearly understood as an intellectual approach to operations. Moreover, concepts of operational design are recognised as functional rather than physical and are flexible enough in definition to be used in more intangible circumstances.

This paper started in conflict – the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. In their insightful work *Military Misfortunes; The Anatomy of Failure in War*, Eliot Cohen and John Gooch draw different lessons from this struggle from those identified by General DePuy and his TRADOC team of doctrine writers. Initial Israeli failures on the Suez Front and on the Golan heights are attributed to what Cohen and Gooch define as ‘failure to anticipate’.⁹⁷ They go on to say that the “surprise and operational failures of October 6-9, 1973, are best understood not as accidents created by an indecisive political leadership or as the result of unavoidable pathologies of intelligence. Rather, they were, at the deepest level, the products of a failure to think through

⁹⁶ Simpkin, *Race to the Swift*, p18.

⁹⁷ Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Random House, 1991) pp 95-133.

the many dimensions of a changing strategic challenge.’⁹⁸ This paper contends that the Israeli Defence Force did not have an operational doctrine to link the challenges of the strategic environment to the tactical level from which DePuy took his inspiration.

This theory is borne out by the book’s conclusion in linking another national definition of doctrine to Cohen and Gooch’s theory of failures to anticipate. The passage is well worth quoting here in full as it summarises this paper’s contentions extremely well.

It is interesting to contrast [with DePuy’s] the Soviet definition of military doctrine as “a system of scientifically sound guiding views which are officially adopted in one or another state and concern the essence, goals and nature of a war, the preparation of the nation and the armed forces for it and the methods of waging it. The political bases of a military doctrine disclose the socio-political essence of modern wars... The military-technical bases of the doctrine determine what the strategic nature of a future war can be like and for what sort of war and against what enemy one must be prepared to fight; what Armed Forces are needed for such a war (their effective strength, organisation and technical equipping); what the methods could be for carrying out strategic and operational-tactical missions in a future war; what forms and methods can be used to train an army and a navy...”. Ironically, despite the difference between a liberal democracy and a party dictatorship, the Soviet view is the less rigid, the richer, the more imaginative. One might say, as a kind of shorthand, that the Soviets conceive of doctrine as a picture of future war, incorporating politics and technology as well as tactics. This far more inclusive picture of war makes a great deal of sense: *Failures of anticipation may be best understood as doctrinal failures, using the term in the Soviet sense.*⁹⁹

From Cohen and Gooch’s analysis the Soviet model would seem to be cohesive, comprehensive and nested from strategy to tactics through the operational level of war and equally applicable to all environments of conflict. Without such an imperative being understood by the fielded force to give a widespread grasp of the concepts of an organisation’s operational doctrine, then that organisation is vulnerable to what Cohen and Gooch call a failure of anticipation stemming from what Johnson terms doctrinal dissonance. This study has found that, unlike its close ally the British Army, the US Army may be experiencing a disconnect between

⁹⁸ Ibid. p.130.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.238. Emphasis added.

intent and understanding of its latest overarching doctrine which, unless addressed, might well expose it to just such a vulnerability in the near or medium term future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In recommending what might be done to address this situation it is fully recognised that this paper and its associated survey has provides a brief analysis of the relationship between intent and understanding of operational level doctrine in the US and UK armies. It is also acknowledged that the current edition of the US Army's FM 3-0 is only two years old and that perhaps it is a little early to judge its impact on the operational community. This paper is concerned enough at the lack of correlation between the intent of the publication and its perception amongst operators to suggest three measures to promote better understanding and provide increased utility from its application.

The first of these measures requires a degree of intellectual honesty from the US Army. Russell Weighley, Professor of History at Temple University, has described how "the strategy of annihilation became characteristically the American way in war."¹⁰⁰ This matches a recommendation from Clausewitz, "...the destruction of the enemy's armed forces, amongst all the objects which can be pursued in war, appears always the one which overrules all others," and "...the destruction of the enemy's military force is the leading principle of war..."¹⁰¹ If this strategy of annihilation, in which attrition and the application of force on force plays such an important part is a culturally acceptable theory of warfare for the US Army, then it should be possible to admit the fact and conceptualise its underpinning of operational doctrine. This paper's survey has shown that US officers would be more than amenable to a more physically based approach to the employment of military force. The problem is that annihilation is not an appropriate concept for operations other than war. It simply does not translate to humanitarian or

¹⁰⁰ Russell F. Weighley, *The American Way of War*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977) p.xxii.

disaster relief operations, or even to many forms of complex sensitive peacekeeping duties. So if the US Army cannot conceptualise annihilation through attrition warfare, then what might take its place?

There are, in fact, a number of seemingly competing theories in the marketplace of doctrine today. This paper has already introduced that of the ‘Manoeuvre Warfare’ school of the UK Armed Forces and the USMC. The survey has shown that the British Army seems to have been quite successful in implanting its concept despite rather more physical traditions. General Sir John Kiszely, former commander of 1 (UK) Armoured Division and Commandant of the UK Joint Service Staff College notes, “...these prerequisites [of manoeuvre warfare] were not notable in the British Army for most of the Cold War period and that the result was an approach to warfare which tended toward the attritional and positional.”¹⁰² So it can be done. In addition to manoeuvre warfare, but certainly from the same stable, comes ‘Effects Based Operations’ (EBO), currently championed by the US Air Force. Developed in conjunction with the RAND National Defence Research Institute, the definition of EBO conceives and plans operations, “in a systems framework that considers the full range of direct, indirect and cascading effects – effects that may, with different degrees of probability, be achieved by the application of military, diplomatic, psychological and economic instruments.”¹⁰³ Whatever arguments can be found with the detail of EBO, it cannot be considered that its definition at least does not provide a conceptual linkage between strategy and tactics, and, because of its subordination of fire effect to one instrument among many, could apply across the spectrum of conflict.

Another concept to consider is called ‘Rapid Decisive Operations’ (RDO). The result of an experimentation process sponsored by the US Joint Force Command, RDO in its present format is “focused at the operational level in a smaller-scale contingency. However, the

¹⁰¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, p.44 and p.284.

¹⁰² John Kiszely, “The British Army and Approaches to Warfare Since 1945,” in the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, Dec 98, Vol 143, Issue 6, p203.

principles of RDO may be applied across the range of military operations.’¹⁰⁴ Having answered the challenge of applicability to the contemporary operating environment, the definition of RDO puts it firmly in the realm of a concept at the operational level which therefore links strategy to tactics.¹⁰⁵ This definition is, of course, a more complex evolution of manoeuvre warfare, but answers the clarion call for a concept most effectively.

The second measure recommended by this paper derives from its introduction of RDO. That concept was developed by a US *Joint Service* project. For a truly conceptual operational doctrine to be effective, it must be embedded in a multi-agency mindset and therefore must have significant commonality across the joint services. The origins of RDO are, from that perspective, encouraging. In future, the army, navy and air force will always work together in the international environment and therefore should have a common conceptual understanding of the operational challenge. US single service doctrine is currently disconnected from joint doctrine, although the system is undergoing a process of change as this paper is written. It is therefore recommended that study be addressed towards the provision of a common concept for operations that is acknowledged by all three services.

Such an approach would lay the foundations for a truly hierarchical doctrinal relationship. UK doctrine has just such a structure, as shown in Appendix 3, and the USMC has also designated how it sees publications making operational linkage (shown at Appendix 4). At

¹⁰³ Paul K. Davis, *Effects Based Operations*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), p.xiii.

¹⁰⁴ Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO) White Paper, United States Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), J9 Joint Futures Lab, Coordinating Draft (Version 2.0) dated 9 Aug 01. Preface.

¹⁰⁵ Definition of RDO (Ibid p.ii) – RDO is a joint operational concept for future operations. A rapid decisive operation will integrate knowledge, command and control, and effects-based operations to achieve the desired political/military effect. In preparing for and conducting a rapid decisive operation, the military acts in concert with and leverages the other instruments of national power to understand and reduce the adversary’s critical capabilities and coherence. The United States and its allies asymmetrically assault the adversary from directions and in dimensions against which he has no counter, dictating the terms and tempo of the operation. The adversary, suffering from loss of coherence and unable to achieve his objectives, chooses to cease actions that are against US interests or has his capabilities defeated.

present there is no such matrix of relationship accepted by the US Army and it is recommended that its creation is overdue.

Finally, as advocated by Paul Johnston, it is recommended that a change must be made to education and training in order that doctrinal concepts are fully understood by the fielded force. In short, this demands an early introduction to operational theory and doctrine to officers and soldiers in initial training. Only in this way might they perceive how those tactics, techniques and procedures that they are subsequently taught relate to the operational environment.

The US Army's publication of FM 3-0 portrays the intent to identify an operational concept that will bridge the intellectual gap between strategy and the execution of tactics. It seems, however, that despite this attempt, there is no commonly understood mindset with which American officers can interpret strategic direction in terms of the operational environment to produce bespoke tactical solutions. That is, unless one counts a physical, attritional approach to the application of force that has no value to operations other than war. In contrast UK Army doctrine offers a framework for thought that inherently binds the operator to a systems approach to any given situation, understanding the relationships of cause and effect, symptom and antidote so that combat power can be tailored appropriately. Unless the US Army follows suit, it may find that its army is able to function successfully only on the conventional battlefield.

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY FORMAT

The following is a reproduction of the body of the survey referred to in this paper. It should be noted that different versions were produced for US and UK army officers, including the appropriate reference to that nation's operational doctrine publications (ADP 1 or FM 3-0). That was the only difference of phrasing or content.

COMPARITIVE DOCTRINE SURVEY

In order to access individuals' own perceptions about doctrinal concepts, this survey will not necessarily use official definitions. You are therefore requested to use your judgment in approximating an answer as close as possible to your understood definition of a particular term. Please feel free to provide expansive comment in the space provided. When completing the survey do not refer to doctrinal publications.

1. ADP 1/FM 3-0 is intended for use at what level of war?

- a) Tactical.
- b) Operational.
- c) Strategic.
- d) All of the above.

2. I understand manoeuvre warfare to be:

- a) A conceptual approach to warfighting which is about the way in which a force thinks about operations.
- b) The physical use of dynamic manoeuvre on the battlefield to focus firepower upon the enemy.

3. I think ADP 1/FM 3-0 is intended to:

- a) Describe how the Army will conduct operations.
- b) Describe what the Army will do when conducting operations.
- c) Describe the Army's intellectual approach to conducting operations.

4. At the operational level of war, the Centre of Gravity of an adversary is:

- a) Usually the enemy force array.
- b) A geographic point which, if held, will prove decisive.
- c) Any source of enemy psychological strength.

5. At the operational level of war, I understand the phrase 'lines of operation' to mean:

- a) Then physical linkage of friendly force progress from its home base towards closing with the enemy.
- b) The conceptual linkage of inter-agency actions within a campaign towards a common objective or set of objectives.

6. Although now dated, the concept of 'deep, close and rear' operations is best described as:

- a) 'Deep' is the enemy's rear area; 'close' is where the fight is and 'rear' is the friendly force's communications zone.
- b) 'Deep' is the adversary's linkage to its power base, 'close' is where I can influence the current environment directly and 'rear' is the linkage of friendly forces to their centre of gravity.

7. The US/UK Army's operational doctrine:
- a) Allows the main effort to be changed during an operation.
 - b) Does not allow the main effort to be changed during an operation.
 - c) Allows the main effort to be changed, but only with specific, detailed instructions from the senior commander.

8. What is more important to you as a commander?
- a) Your designated task.
 - b) Your designated purpose.
 - c) The commander's intent you received from higher.

9. Into which generic area would you say ADP1/FM 3-0 orients its reader?
- a) The moral domain.
 - b) The physical domain.
 - c) The conceptual domain.

10. On balance, do you think ADP 1/FM 3-0 has more utility for:
- a) Warfighting.
 - b) Peace Operations.
 - c) Any military operation.

11. ADP 1/FM3-0 seeks to:

- a) Focus fire and manoeuvre in order to mass decisive force on the enemy.
- b) Enable identification and isolation of enemy weaknesses that can subsequently be attacked appropriately.

12. What is the most crucial phase of the command estimate/MDMP?

- a) Mission Analysis.
- b) Course of action comparison.
- c) Wargaming.
- d) Other (please describe).

13. In a game of chess, what would you designate a player's centre of gravity?

- a) The King.
- b) The Queen.
- c) Other (please specify).

14. I have read ADP 1/FM 3-0:

- a) Regularly and am very familiar with its content.
- b) When necessary and I have a passing acquaintance with its content.
- c) Rarely or never and I do not feel confident in interpreting its content.

15. My branch is:

- a) Combat.
- b) Combat Support.
- c) Combat Service Support.

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